MOUNTAIN

Clement Wood

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MOUNTAIN

A Novel

BY

CLEMENT WOOD

AUTHOR OF "THE EARTH TURNS SOUTH,"
"GLAD OF EARTH," "JEHOVAH,"
ETC.

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TO

THEODORE DREISER

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MOUNTAIN

I

BIRTH

MOUNTAIN

I

HIGH places have always held for a man a spell and a mystery. He could not traverse the windy ways of air, the spacious trails of the birds; but he could climb these rocky steeps, as hard-won steps toward the billowing mountains of clouds, and the beaconing stars, and the sky-homed mystery of mysteries. The hills were a fastness to daring souls, yielding far vistas of shrunken valleys. They were a menace to the low-dwellers: out of the heights fierce warriors darted, like plunging eagles or swooping hawks, to plunder the placid wealth below. Men were their bone-whitened victims, and their lengthened, pliable arms.

The chill mantle of snow, the provocative veiling of clouds, rested upon them; their streams were arteries to the valleys below, offering life to tree and beast and man, and later an easy path to the shore and the sea. They were size made tangible, power made visible. From their crests the lightning flamed, the hoarse tongue of the thunder spoke. The mountain in labor sometimes brought forth a mouse; sometimes, a rain of fiery death to the Herculaneums cowering at its foot. Ararat and Nebo, Popocatapetl, Pelion and Pelé, Olivet and Calvary, were hills. It is no wonder that men sought them: Mahomet in the end went to the mountain. It was on Olympus that Jupiter held his home; it was from storming Sinai that Jehovah thundered.

Four low hills lay side by side, near the center of a southern state. They stretched their prone forms, like four gray and red-brown serpents, from the piney foothills above the Black Belt to the craggy Appalachians. Their visible bodies were parallel; but their rocky skeletons, that jutted into water-worn summits, were not. The two outer hills were like the top halves of the shells of a huge bivalve; their gray structure, chipped by the persistent artisanship of time, still indicated that they had once folded high above the two central heights. The stony structures of the latter leant toward one another; they were now taller and of a darker hue than their gray outposts.

It was the second hill, as you came from the east, that was called simply "the mountain." It ran almost due north and south; its western half was a steep and even slope, its more gradual eastern side was toothed with countless prongs flung into sunrise lowlands, brought up abruptly by the sandstone crags to the east. The crest of the mountain was indented irregularly by rounded gaps or passes, like pie-crust carelessly forked.

The rocks that broke through its summit tilted sharply to the east, just under the surface of the mountain. Four miles nearer the sunset, beyond Bragg Valley and Adamsville, the iron city, was the third hill, whose rocks slanted at almost the same angle as the mountain's, but in the opposite direction. This had once been the mountain's sunset slope. Flanking the central heights to east and west the sandstone hills, "Shadow Mountain," and "Sand Mountain" beyond West Adamsville, were at once younger and older than the central ridges,—later in their depositing, earlier in their contact with the sky.

A mountain has no memory, as men have. Outside forces may gash and groove it, as memory is cut into the mountain's wandering sons; but these scars have no

meaning to the hill itself: they are only legible to its more meditative children.

If the mountain had had memory, it would have been able to think back to a period long past. Then it lay germinating beneath a slowly thickening crust of clay and sand, under a restless sea swarming with jelly-like bodies and strange shelled creatures. The former left no trace; the armored creepers, dying, left their self-built monuments, to swell and pimple the oozy wave deposits. Buried, unborn, the mountain lay for lengthening ages.

But the skin of the earth is restless, as the inner fires waver in their long cooling. Beneath the volatile cloak of air, and the tidal robe of waters, the rocky layer encrusting the unknown vast core of the earth moves in its own hour. A slow adjustment, a period of planetary shudders, and a land is engulfed, a continent pressed upward. The thick strata, the product of long and intermittent deposits, are buckled, folded, and squeezed into mountain chains; huge slices of ageless schists and gneisses are torn away and driven above the younger strata; there is an immense crumpling and rupture. So are the hills born.

At last the time of parturition came for the mountain. Force, says Marx, is the midwife of progress; force, a vast and burning upheaval from below, a strained and spasmodic pressure from the molten womb of the earth, bowed the mountain out of its deep resting place, tilted away the early sea, arched its summit high over the surrounding lowlands. The stress of its long birth-pangs squeezed and fused its scattered substance into a closer, more welded body. Above it still folded its sandy younger covering, shutting it from sun and cloaking sky.

Out of the northern lands the tilted waters came, joined by brawling floods of melted snow and rain.

Slowly, following the central crevass cracked by the main upheaval, these wore off the mantling sandstone, until it retreated sulkily to east and west,—bared breastworks of grayness, bald and hoary crests whose dull whitening seemed a stooped and withdrawn age. Down the midst of the mountain swirled the flood, until the first widening fissure opened into a long bowl four miles wide; and two cowering hills separated by this gradual bowl-like valley were all that was left of its curving majesty. The stream slowed, narrowed, became a paltry creek, noisy only in wet weather.

So was the mountain born.

Green scarfed it in the green seasons; but barer months revealed the weathered red outcropping on its summit. Its red stain smudged the valley, and tinted the water that carried its message to the far gulf.

The mountain did not know the red and stiffened earth-blood within its heart, or the secret of the red stain. No more did Shadow Mountain know the reason for its grayness. The square sandstones quarried from it and faced to support thin wooden walls, the unconcealing glass fired out of its materials into goblets and vases, could not tell their origin. Nor could the rough red boulders carted away to hungry charcoal-fed furnaces, nor the iron sows and pigs, and the tempered rails and chains that were fashioned of its being, explain their nature, or the hard red substance that was the mountain's heart. But at last its self-conscious children knew the secret, and called it iron.

Redness, iron, congealed earth blood,—the name is unimportant. The thing itself was the multiple-veined heart of the mountain, red, cold, and waiting.

II

THE JUDSONS

II

SIXTY miles southeast of the mountain drowsed the town of Jackson, sinew of the old South as surely as Adamsville was brawn of the new. Gettysburg and even Appomattox had said their words before the earliest Ross had squared the logs for the first shanty over Ross Creek, from which the iron city grew; and at that time Jackson had already counted its half century.

It lay in the crotch where the river forked. Protected by water on two sides, and by open barrens on the third, its location had attracted wandering Cherokees into building here their huts and log stockades, until guarded Tallulah became the Indian heart of the region. The persistent seeping of pioneer migration from the eastern seaboard eddied around it; the white interloper treated here with the native, coveted the prosperous red fortress, and made it his own. Its name was changed later to that of the popular hero who drove back the redcoats from the rich levees of New Orleans, and scattered before him the redskins of the palmettoed peninsula at the southeast land's end. When the young nineteenth century brought statehood, bustling Jackson became the capital. It is hard for those who remember Jackson, or Charleston, or Richmond, in the sleepy glamor of their later years, to think of these as uncouth pioneer clearings: but such was their beginning. The first town hall in Jackson was a blockhouse, and more than once the straggly strings of huts at the split of the river, which constituted the settlement, had seen marauding Indians repelled from its main street.

Political dignity transfigured the village out of its buckskin and bowie-knife existence, into a leisurely civic siesta. Governors and legislators peopled its walks; pillared mansions grew at the heads of long avenues of water oak. The hilly barrens and sedgy river-fields were combed into ordered rows of large-bladed corn and stocky cotton bushes. Slavery came early, and the slave quarters stretched behind the mansions and in the parched treeless opens. The anomalous shanties of the poor whites sprang like fungoids on outlying poor lands, and bunched near the river pier, where the fussy side-wheelers, the *Tallulah* and the *Southern Star,* churned the muddy water, eager to paddle away past swampland and sandy waste to the gulf. Idling negroes sprawled along the pier, and on the bales before gin and compress; vehement orators in the Capitol fisted their defiance to the dastardly Liberty Men coiled like vipers in the arid North. The heavy pour of the sun, and the formal courtesy of the lords of the dark soil and the dark soul, mellowed the manner of the place, shaped it into that unhealthy beauty and charm men call the Old South.

One of the earliest white settlers had been a Potomac planter, Derrell Judson. His vigorous descendants had grown up with the town, and left their touch upon the whole somnolent section. There was a disused Judson's Landing three miles up stream, and a ramshackle Judsontown on the Greenville Road to the southwest. Two of the family had been mayors of the village; there had been a wartime lieutenant-governor, and at least one congressman, with a proud host of lesser officials. None of the family had meant more to Judson eyes than a grandson of the early settler, Judge Tom Judson, whose flashing spirit had broken from his last year at college, in the troubled early spring of '61, to enter the gray

cavalry. A year later, a captain now, he had hurled himself in daily desperate charges against the imperturbable Army of the Potomac, following his beloved Stonewall. At last an exploding shell carried off an arm, and with it his military usefulness to the Confederacy. When he walked weakly out of the hospital, two years later, the cause had become too hopeless for his capable direction to be of value.

With the war's end came the order, signed by his own governor, calling for emancipation. In front of the weather-etched pillars of the portico, Judge Judson lined up his slaves, and dismissed them from servile happiness into precarious freedom. Close beside him were his three sons, Derrell, Pratt, and Paul, the eldest only six; their young minds were black with tearful rage against the "damn Yankees" who were causing the exile of the loved negroes. The black faces were grimed with tears; this changed social condition seemed nothing but a calamity to the well-tended household.

Many of the slaves could not be persuaded to leave. Old Isaac, the coachman, hung onto the reins until he dropped dead at the cemetery, one broiling Decoration Day. Aunt Jane, who superintended the cooking, dared "them Bureau-ers" to meddle around her kitchen. The younger negroes gradually straggled away; but their places were filled with servants as well known to the family. The masters' attitude toward them, as might have been expected, remained almost the same as during "slavery times."

The judge built out of the empty days an enviable practice of law, and trained one son to aid him in this. The three brothers gradually took their father's place in Jackson living; and at the beginning of the last decade of the century, they were essential to the well-ordered

existence of the community. The Jackson Hotel, where the present Derrell Judson had succeeded an uncle, had been the center of the town's visiting life for fifty years. The time-specked shingle, "Judson & Judson, Practitioners in All Courts of Law and Equity," still hung above a run-down office entrance, where Pratt Judson kept the firm name in use, although there had been no partner for more than fifteen years. The youngest brother, Paul, had graduated from the State University at Greenville the year of his father's death. With an initiative tendency unpromised by his blood, he determined to lead off into a new line, deciding upon real estate, through a belief in the physical expansion of the river town.

Two doors from the Judson house was the Barbour "city" place. It was during the solemn painfulness of his father's funeral that Mary Barbour first impressed herself upon the sorrowing youngest son's imagination. They had been boy and girl together; in those days they had decocted frequent mud confections with Pratt, and Jack Lamar and Cherokee Ryland. But the girl had grasped a rare chance to attend an art school in Philadelphia, just after Paul started to college; and now, after the absence, he found her grown into a new and surprising grace of person. There was a hint of shy primitive beauty in her irregular features. The hair was chestnut, and as straight as an Indian's; the eyes possessed that quality of sympathetic comprehension that spoke the mother-soul. His heart, emptied by the gap of his father's absence, needed a new object to cling to; and she was attractive, obvious, and near.

Mary Barbour had already admired Paul with an artist's aloof gaze; she saw in him a tall, black-eyed young beau, the best shot in the Jackson Grays, the invariable cotillion leader. Now she began to know him as the

ardent lover as well. With characteristic determination, he elbowed all tentative rivals out of the way. The girl found herself escorted with gallant insistence everywhere by this headstrong and heartstrong wooer; dances, picnics, gossiping church suppers,—for eleven months his attendance delighted heart-coupling minds in the little town.

One cool June night he caught her hands within his, in the honey-suckled dimness of the Barbour side-porch. "Mary, dearest, dearest,——" His assurance deserted him for a moment, his throat gulped. He clung to the relaxed fingers. "We—we've waited——" he paused lamely, then finished assertively, "It's been long enough!"

A caressing smile went with her answer. "It's not a year, Paul,—mother was engaged almost four."

"I can take care of you now," he urged with affectionate crispness. "We've had enough of this, honey. You fix the date—to-night!" His arms bound her closer.

"Paul—you hurt——"

"Then do as I say," he laughed, triumphantly passionate.

He won her answer.

The wedding helped christen the new Baptist Church. The systematic sweetness of the honeymoon included a flashed glimpse of Mammoth Cave, and a short stay at Niagara. Upon the return followed eager days and nights in which she was allowed to grow into his plans. He discussed his projects fully with her, taking her to see the houses, lots, and subdivisions from which their living was chiefly derived. She marveled at his ceaseless energy. Drive, drive, drive,—in a fading community dozing in the enervating aroma of decaying days: no wonder he succeeded so well! The business constantly broadened in importance and scope.

Mary had her plans and dreams too,—intimate visions

that left small room for the old desires toward artistic success; and these she soon shared with Paul. The husband was anxious that the first baby should be a boy. He had not tired of his grinding work; but he had begun to realize that the slowly maturing schemes would inevitably open out further opportunities; business was a never ending, slowly widening game. He could, of course, confine his activities to the simple beginnings. But he realized that this could only mean that some one else would take advantage of what he had started; and he wanted to keep his fingers clamped upon the pulse of it all. The time would come when a son who could fit into his visionings would be an invaluable aid.

The days plodding toward the birth, when Mary walked, more and more alone, down the narrowing road to the ultimate taut gate of motherhood, made the warm-eyed bride even dearer to him. It seemed so unfair, this voluntary tempting of death required of the woman —there were hours when he hated himself for the summoning of the ancient curse upon woman, and would have put himself in pledge to recall the irrevocable act. The dragging schedule of pain should somehow be altered. But the thought of the tiny son on his insensate way was a consolation.

The elaborate layette, with ample contributions from friends and relatives, was threaded with tiny blue ribbons; the baby's arrival, like a human alkali on litmus-paper, changed the significant shade to pink. Eleanor, his first born, gradually claimed her father's regard; but, although Paul never referred to it, the perversion of his hopes was a tremendous disappointment.

The second girl, Susan, followed two short years later. By this time the father had pushed into the management of the Jackson Street Railway, and had seen to it that the persistent dummy duly puffed and creaked through

Newtown, a cheap suburb he had plotted out around the cotton mill to the north. Absorption in this scarcely left him time to regret the second daughter; he accepted the fact as a matter of course; he did not waste regret upon a thing he could not change.

Then came Pelham, the first boy. Mary never forgot the days of packed happiness when she sang over his crinkly head, in the creaky yellow rocker that had been her mother's. They had been waiting for him so long,—the father was so boyishly happy and proud of the wrinkled pink bundle that her mother put in his arms for a precious moment, even before Mary had seen her son,—somehow making a man child seemed a big achievement. And he had been her boy from the first; the fourth baby, fat little Hollis, never touched her strung heart chords as did the earlier son.

They were indeed lovely children, Mary was fond of telling herself. But they were a constant drain upon her time and attention, and upon Paul's bank account. Sheer desire to accomplish had driven him at first; with the coming of the boys, he had to buckle down for their sakes.

The renewed vigor of his enterprise lengthened the reach of his dealings. Among the real estate men throughout the state who measured themselves against him, he found none shrewder or more alert than an Adamsville operator, old Nathaniel Guild. This man, interested in some state grants, stopped at the Jackson Hotel while the legislature was in session, and thus met Paul. The local operator felt the calculating scrutiny of the other during all of an all-day barbecue and junket taken by the law-makers at Tallulah Shoals. Evidently satisfied at last, on the ride in the elder man leaned over, and said with hesitating gravity, "You've been to Adamsville?"

"Why, yes. . . . Not only pleasure trips; we handle lots out Hazelton way."

Guild waved this aside. "An excrescence. Have you noticed the mountain—the one west of the city?"

"Recently I've only been there on business——"

The gray eyes narrowed and sparkled. "I'm talking business. There's land for sale there, that will quadruple in value in ten years. The development must be in that direction,—that is, for the first-class residence section. I've got a little to invest; I want some one to go in with me. What do you say?"

"I like to watch my money. I'm tied up here——"

"Come to the iron city: it needs iron men." Appraising admiration spoke in his glance. "I think you'd fit. Why, man, Jackson hasn't added a thousand people in forty years; Adamsville has fifty thousand now, to your five."

The idea startled Paul. Leave Jackson! It was one thing for Dr. Ryland to go away, or the Lamar boys, or even Judge Roscoe Little and Borden Crenshaw. They were comparative newcomers; the earliest Crenshaw dated back only sixty years. But the Judsons were a Jackson fixture: his place was here. His black eyes clouded uncertainly; at that, he might invest a little. . . .

The other's words continued; ". . . chance of a lifetime. It's big!"

"When can we look it over?" A spurt of eagerness spoke in the tone.

"Come up next week. . . . Bring Mrs. Judson?"

"I doubt if she could make it."

"You'll come?"

"Ye-es. I may bring the eldest boy."

After dinner he told Mary of the conversation. "We couldn't pull up stakes, I'm afraid. Anyway, Pelham will enjoy the trip. How about it, son?"

"Oh, father!" The bright-eyed face was expressive enough.

Her consent was assumed, Mary noticed, as had been her husband's custom for the last few years.

He did not tell her how his mind kept recurring to the other suggestion that Guild had made. If he were ever to leave Jackson, the time had come. The state capital stood still. Adamsville, founded since the war, already crowded New Orleans as the commercial center of the gulf region. Judge Little had moved his law office there; at least a dozen prominent Jacksonians were prospering in the iron city. The iron city! He could find room to stretch his visions there!

Nathaniel Guild stayed over and made the trip with the two Judsons. It was a tiresome journey for all of them; at length, his attention worn out with the dizzying panorama of the sunset hills, the boy's head nodded forward on his hands, his eyes closed, his breathing became deep and regular.

Some time later, the father reached over and shook the sleeping boy kindly by the shoulder. "Wake up, Pelham,—Adamsville!"

The tired child straightened quickly, showering a drizzle of cooled cinders from Paul's linen duster, tucked around him. "Are we there?"

"Just about. . . . I'm afraid it's too dark to see the mountain. These are the furnace yards. . . . Watch for the coke ovens!"

Pelham needed no urging.

The train was slowing. The heavy coaches bumped over uneven places in the roadbed. There was a subdued hissing scream where wheel met track.

At first he could make out nothing through the window. The light from the smelly kerosene lamps above

fell on the dull sides of freight cars; he could see only a vague darkness between them.

Abruptly the string of cars ended. Beyond a wide open space he saw sinister black buildings, grotesque, bulging with vast tanks. Above, a trellis-work of ladders ended in ungainly smokestacks that crowded the sky. Suddenly a burst of flame, a piercing tongue of reds and yellows, broke from the top of one of the wider tanks. Dense smoke and steam shot out. The whole yard was washed in a red glare.

"Charging the furnace," Paul said. He was as thrilled as his son at the sight.

Guild, in the window corner, shriveled still farther into his seat, his lined face crackling with pleasure, as he observed the boy's intense astonishment.

Pelham did not answer his father. He greedily absorbed every sharp detail of the burning picture. The metallic buildings seemed made of flame. The occasional windows just passed flickered redly,—as if the night, within and without, were on fire. The light dimmed, burned brightly for a moment, then startlingly went out. The vacant night was blacker than ever.

Dim thoughts struggled within the mind of the child,—clouded fancies of the mouth of hell, the pit of eternal burning and damnation.

Then, as the train ground to a standstill, again the night flared brilliantly. The tracks glowed like pulsing, living gold. Just beyond the third pair, and parallel to them, ran a long mound, hardly higher than the train. Every few feet leaping fire twisted up from it. The smell of the smoke stung his nostrils.

A man with a lantern ran shouting past the window, and disappeared; his face was coal-smeared, red, horrible, in the sudden glow. The boy shuddered. There

were black figures standing around the fire holes. Three or four were dumping a squat-bellied car into one of them. The waiting train was stiflingly warm. It must be frightfully hot above the fire! Those devils there emptying cargoes of lost souls into the brimstone pits, —surely they could not be men!

"Coke ovens," explained the father.

Pelham pressed his nose more tightly to the pane.

The other man drew out his bulky wallet, and was lost in the intricacies of some creased maps. Paul Judson pointed here, there, upon their surfaces, arguing vehemently. The boy paid no attention to any of it.

This was his first sight of the iron city. He never forgot it. . . .

The mountain, when they reached it the next morning, was marvelously different. The steam dummy passed the last house, and the negro shacks sprawling beyond, and began to puff and cough up the steep slope.

It was May, and the boy's dreamy fancies were caught and tangled in the green vistas that endlessly opened and closed on both sides of the track. Below the fill on the town side a succession of heavy-fruited blackberry bushes ran close to the tracks. The broad leaves and waxen flowers of the May-apple carpeted unexpected clearings. A shapeless negress, four babies clutching her skirts, balanced her heavy basket on her head, and blinked stolidly at them.

At last they struck the level gap road, and the end of the dummy line just beyond.

Pelham gathered wild flowers, as they climbed up to the northern crest of the gap. They were for his mother, if they could be induced to last until night. On the top overlooking the wide valley he found a convenient rise of rock steps, shaped out of the solid iron ore;

while his father and Mr. Guild talked and pointed, he sat down, fanning himself with his sailor. . . .

The men strolled back, Paul's face flushed. He gestured impetuously from the elevation to the citied valley below. "A magnificent chance, Nathaniel. Your mountain grips me."

"It'll take a long time, remember. Don't go off half-cocked."

"The thing's here before my eyes!"

"Adamsville won't really touch the mountain for ten years. It's good . . . fine residence property, but . . . That's the Crenshaw land, just beyond. They have four eighties; they run all the way to this road." The heads bent over the map again.

"We've simply got to take it all," Paul reiterated.

Guild's familiar cautions and objections came forth again. "Not that I wouldn't like to, but . . ."

"That's all you can see in it, then?" Paul asked finally.

"Frankly, it's all I can put in anything now."

"I'm going into it hard. How will this do? We'll take half of this eighty together, and the nearest Crenshaw one. I'll buy the rest of this and the Crenshaw land, and the Logan place on the south. . . . I can raise it somehow. Pratt will help me. . . . It will be first mortgage."

With this settled, they circled down to the gap, and back by dummy to the Great Southern Hotel.

On the way down to the dummy station, Paul picked a dogwood blossom. It was still fresh in his lapel when he and his son arrived at the pillared home in Jackson.

Pelham's flowers of the morning had withered; his moist clenched fingers had reluctantly abandoned most of them on the seat of the tardy Dixie Flier. But the limp remains in his grimy handkerchief he carried into his mother's room, and left on her dresser.

The boy was asleep when she found them. After pausing above a half-emptied scuttle, she arranged them in a small green vase, and replaced them in the bedroom. All night their quiet odor upset the ordered room with a word of wilder life.

III

PAUL JUDSON came back from that trip on fire with the mountain. On the creased blue-print he traced for Mary the outlines of the sections and quarter-sections, wooing her interest, a thing he had long ceased to do. His pencil shaded the curving paths to the crest, and aimlessly roughed in a design for a house; this he eyed from several angles. "Guild agrees that this would be the best location for a home."

Her mind pieced out the half-uttered wish. "Not for us, Paul!"

"Mm . . . maybe."

"But—to leave Jackson!"

He grew argumentative, with an expansive selflessness. "It's only fair to the children to give them the wider chance. There are nice people in Adamsville . . . big people."

Her every objection was met by an urgent answer; she resigned herself at last to his insistent determination. Sometimes, lately, she had felt a little afraid of this masterful husband, the incarnation of courtesy away from home, the slave-driver with his family. His father had been the same type, as Paul had once reminded her. It stirred in his blood; Derrell and Pratt, the older brothers, had ordered him around, as a boy, as dictatorially as if he were a negro; he, in turn, had bossed the neighboring children, and the servants. "Bred in the bone," Mary had once said to her mother. "He can cover it; he can't change it."

On occasion, he was considerate and tender; but if

there was work to be done, he attacked it with impetuous ferocity. Negroes, children, even his wife, became tools to be picked up, used, and laid down as quickly. In her heart Mary resented the attitude, even while defending it to her family.

It was in this mood that he plunged at the acquisition of the mountain lands, and the planning of the new house. Mary found little of the chummy spirit that had warmed the first few married years; instead, the hold that the hill had taken upon his imagination intensified his usual dominance. Adamsville, the mountain, called him. He had a recurring, varying vision of the iron city brought to the feet of the mountain; of country estates climbing up to his crest home, overlooking the whole city, the state, the South. He saw himself filling coveted public offices. . . . The shifting details spurred his determination. With the mountain his, he could do anything, be anything. . . . He gave slack rein to these fancies; for he knew that man spent more hours upon these preparatory visions, desire-spun solitaire conversations and imaginary victories, than upon any other activity: even sleep was filled with a continuation of the day's longings, altered but unmistakable. He would differ from the usual man in that he would drive or bend to completion these airy plannings.

His secret dreams he shared with no one. Mary may have suspected their existence, from his silent spells of brow-knitted thought, but he denied her the confidence her cordial sympathy had hoped for. His desire blueprinted the future unassisted.

At times he sought to weigh this push that quickened his nature. He began to think of himself as one of the iron men out of whom the New South was being forged, painfully but surely. He was a Judson in all of it; but he possessed, more than the rest, a driving ambition too

strong to be satisfied with the unfruitful life of a Southern aristocrat. Changing conditions were rapidly eliminating this impossible and antiquated incongruity. He was more than a Judson. His nature reacted away from the typical Southern vices, which neither of his brothers had escaped. He was continent, even in drinking. The endless object lesson that had been given him by his crotchetty old father, who toward the last drank himself into a daily querulousness, was not lost on the son. Paul rarely took even a toddy; and the clear mind that this gave should be of value in whatever harsh, lean years might follow.

All of his energy went toward the mountain. It was Mary whose embroidering fancy christened the new home "Hillcrest Cottage," on her one visit to the place, just before the completion of the interior. Beyond this, she found her counsel unheeded in the designing, even in the complicated arrangements for the moving.

What a time is moving! A self-willed chaos to familiar routines and associations, an involuntary revisiting of dead hours and buried sensations. It brings an endless plowing up of forgotten once-hallowed trifles, which the fond heart would fain reject, but can not; it is a rooted and ample world fitted into packing cases, hustled and baled into temporary death. The old life was and is not, the new life is still to begin. It warns of the shaky foundations beneath rooted habitudes; and at the same time calls forth adventure and daring in the soul of man.

Such thoughts thronged Paul Judson's mind, in disjointed sequence, as his busy steps took him through the large littered rooms of the family mansion. He wore his old garden shoes, stained by grass and lime, scuffed by cinders: a pair of carefully patched brown woolen trousers, the lower half of a once prized suit; and a blue-

figured shirt, turned to a V at the neck, with a green paint blotch on one side which strenuous laundryings had not been able to efface. A wall mirror gave him a passing reflection of himself; he smiled as he pictured what would have been his father's horror at such ungentlemanly garb. Boxes of books, ropes for the extra trunks, piles of straw for the china—all these must be arranged under his eyes. He packed the fragile Haviland and the shaped fish set, used only on unusual occasions, with his own hands. He knew negroes; you couldn't trust them with a thing.

He looked irritably under lumped old quilts, piles of table linen, and cloth-shielded pictures. "Mary!" he demanded, sharply.

"Yes, dear?" She dropped what she had been doing at once.

A free hand gestured nervously. "The hammer—I had it just a moment ago."

An experienced gaze interrogated the room. It was the ninth call for that hammer since breakfast had been cleared away.

Just beyond the door an empty packing-case gaped. She put her hand on the missing implement, cached within it.

The troubled line left his forehead. "We'll take the pictures next," he said curtly, bending again to his task.

Mary Judson stood watching his efficient activity. She had stayed unnoticed at his elbow nearly all the morning, to anticipate these calls. He continued hammering energetically, unconscious of her observation.

He straightened his still youthful shoulders a moment, to lift a stack of heavy books from the mantel. Paul Judson, as she loved best to remember him, furnished the food for her musings; they dwelt in haphazard inconsecutiveness upon his erect figure at the head of the

Decoration Day line of his company, upon his ardent face bending over tiny Pelham's crib, upon his wry expression yesterday while she bandaged a cut wrist; then to the alien admiration her kindly brother felt for the husband's driving vitality.

"Mary, did you get those quilts to cover the piano?" His crisp query broke into her thoughts.

With a start, "On the cherry table, dear."

A contented mumble reached her; evidently the mislaid coverings had been found.

She stirred herself, and called the girls, Eleanor and Sue. "Will you bring father the pile of pictures on my dresser, children?"

They skipped quietly up the stairs.

In a few moments they chattered back through the dining-room, where Mary was adjusting the linen into a cedar chest. Sue stumbled over a corner of the carpet; several unframed photographs slipped out of her arms. Her father looked up impatiently. She recovered them in a moment, and spread them on the bare table.

"Mother, this is me, isn't it? 'N' this is Pelham, 'n' the baby picture is Hollis—isn't it, mother? Nell says it's Pell too."

"That's Hollis, children. Hurry: your father is waiting; he's ready to pack them."

The girls reluctantly went on, arguing over the identity of a befrizzed, balloon-sleeved aunt.

She heard her eldest son in the kitchen now, asking Aunt Sarah if she too were going to the new home. Sarah had been her mammy, and had taken care of all four of the children.

The rich black voice laughed hugely at the question. "Is I gwine? Is Aunt Sarah gwine? Is *you* gwine! Better ask yer maw if she gwineter take you. Whar Mis' Mary Barbour goes, I goes!"

Pelham persisted, "But Aunt Jane isn't goin'."

Precise Sue took him up at once. "Of course she isn't. Aunt Jane's very, very old, Pell. She's 'mos' a hunderd. Aren't you, Aunt Jane?"

The aged cook snorted contemptuously. "What I is, I is, Miss Susie. I'se gwine ter yer Uncle Derrell's, *I* is."

The children gazed open-eyed. "Are you goin' to cook for him 'n' Aunt Eloise?" asked Pelham.

"Sho' I is, honey! Dey gotter have mah cookin', Mister Derrell he says."

The noise of the creaking wagons drawn up at the side door claimed the children's attention. They ran out to watch the first loading, hoping to be allowed to help.

Paul followed briskly, thoroughly at home as an executive, issuing his orders with precision. His active mind ranged even at this absorbing moment. Well, he was leaving a slate wiped clean! All of the Jackson investments had turned out finely; he has sold the real estate to advantage, so as to cover a large part of the mountain purchase money. The street railway stock he was still carrying; its regular income furnished a safe fund to fall back upon.

After the last load had been urged away, he walked with Mary through the echoing emptiness.

"We've been happy here, Paul," she observed quietly.

"Mm . . . yes. Did that box of books in the spare room go with the last load?"

He hurried up to make sure.

Mary saw the children into their heavy wraps—it was unusually chilly for a Jackson October—and young Ike drove them down to the Great Southern station in the old carriage. It had been sold to Shanley's Livery Stable —it would hardly be the thing in Adamsville; but the wife had had her way for once more, due to Paul's ex-

pansive satisfaction at the smooth-running plans, and they were to make their last trip as citizens of Jackson in the accustomed conveyance.

When they became settled in the train, Pelham retold to the sisters the story of his trip to the mountain. They had never seen it, and his colorful narrative fascinated. Mary listened attentively, adding an occasional touch.

Paul went forward into the smoking car. The Dixie Flier was a political exchange for the state, just before the legislature met. There was always some one to listen, though usually unconvinced, to his insistence on the future prosperity of this dormant section. Mary heard his nervous, energetic laugh sound out, when the train stopped at some crossroads station to pick up a giggling group of ginghamed farm-girls and stooped country elders.

The children were quiet now. Across the aisle the baby lay with his head in Nell's lap; Sue was stretched out on the seat facing them, flushed cheek pillowed on cindery hand, brown eyes closed. Pell sat beside his mother, his dreamy face pressed against the smudged car pane, watching the flickering landscape sway by.

They were beautiful . . . her children. But the cost to her ambitions had been heavy. Her vague dreams of a career, cherished while she was at art school, had been shoved far into the future. She realized, with a sigh, that she could never overtake them. Perhaps some one of the children,—perhaps the little son at her side,—would show the same talent; in him she might realize her own hid longings.

It hurt her to leave the quiet home town she had always known and loved, for the restless, youthful city, big with the future. It was the second time that she had felt wholly uprooted from her former life. Home days with Paul and his urging aggressiveness were vastly different from the placid, considerate atmosphere of the

old Barbour plantation. There, a sharp word had been unknown. Her kindly, courtly father, the sweet quiet mother, the gay-hearted brothers and sisters,—there was an unbridgeable chasm between these and the push of her married life.

And now again a change. . . .

Paul had a grasp of things, a will to shove his way over all obstacles, a single-ideaed vision of a high goal, that, she believed, could not fail to win for him the success that he sought. She sometimes wondered if the gentler bringing-up that had been hers would not have been better for the children. But that could not happen. They, she, were to be a part of the swell, the hurried, assertive course of Adamsville. She was glad she would be there to guard her little ones: they would need all she could do.

A long whistle woke her from her reverie. She looked out; the dusk had softened the countryside until it was a dull blur, shot with irregular streaky lights.

Her husband shouldered briskly back from the smoking car. "This is Hazelton, Mary," he said eagerly. "Adamsville next!"

IV

THE Judsons blended easily into the life on the mountain.

Paul took it upon himself to plan and arrange all the details of the new home. Mary found her wishes unconsulted, when furniture was to be placed or purchased.

Much of the furnishings of the Jackson house he used in the new "Hillcrest Cottage." The dining-room suite, with its stately, ornate sideboard and carved chairs, was rearranged in the bay-windowed corner room, overlooking the long vista of Bragg Valley. The diners looked out on the pigmy furnace smokestacks punctuating the dun smoke-mist. The children's rooms, the three chief bedrooms, and the living-room furniture remained unaltered.

Upon the other things, Paul put down his foot. The library set, its antique bookcases and desks curling up toward the ceiling, must be relegated to the attic. The mahogany and bird's-eye maple suite, which had furnished the spare bedroom, must accompany it. The family portraits, the china heirlooms, and the old judge's musty home library, in the same crates in which they had come from Jackson, were pushed into the odd-shaped angles of the twilight garret. These had no place in the elaborate simplicity of a country home.

The study and library were fitted up afresh in dull quartered oak, with sectional bookcases. New porch chairs and lounges for the wide verandas, Persian rugs for the rooms where the old carpets would not suffice, he listed, viewed, and finally purchased. Mary's heart

ached these days as she realized how she had been pushed out of his living.

The phone rang one afternoon. "I'm sending out a rug for the library, Mary. Abramson's promised to get it there before five."

"Did you look at the one at Hooper's I told you about?"

"We'll talk about that when I get home." He rang off sharply.

Mary had it spread out before he arrived. It was a beauty, she thought ruefully; but it must have cost a mint. And it didn't go too well with the new bookcases and desk.

Paul reached home a little early, tired and cross from a big deal that had hung fire for ten days. "Well, how do you like it?"

"It's a lovely piece of goods. How much was it? The tag was off."

He walked in to observe it, altering its angle slightly. "It's just what we wanted. I think we'll have another for the parlor, too." He ignored her anxious eyes, and she did not press the question.

On Sundays Nathaniel Guild usually dropped in, for a stroll over the place, after a breakfast of eggs, bacon, and coffee at seven.

There was so much they must plan together; this could be done only on the ground. Paul, of course, was living on the mountain, and his share in the land was much the larger; but both were interested in the projected development, the wide boulevards curving with the contour of the ground, the advantageous grouping of sites naturally adapted to sloping lawns and well-placed residences.

"You see, Nate, every shrub I set out, every walk we put in, every flight of steps, will increase the value, when we put it on the market."

"Waiting a few years,——"

"Now's the time to begin. Adamsville is spreading fast; it's course is bound to be this way. East Highlands is *the* residence section now——"

"I see Mrs. Friedman's building on Haviland Avenue——"

"And three new houses to go up on East Thirtieth!"

". . . It'll take a lot of money." His eyes roamed reflectively over the gray, jagged outcrop, almost concealed by a tangle of grape and blackberry vines and rangy sumach bushes.

Paul tugged vindictively at a nettle that had encroached upon the path winding up to the house,—he carried his garden gloves for just such purposes. "It'll be cleared before next summer,—all this half of it."

On weekday mornings the master of the mountain was up earlier, hoeing the flower beds that frilled the verandas, and seeing to the setting out of trees and vines. After seven o'clock, he superintended the gangs of negro laborers who were filling and grading the gap road, and the extensions that bent down to the railroad spur on the west.

At times, that first winter, there were more than forty workmen remolding the mountain's resisting face. Quartz blasted from the quarry above the tracks, on the Logan land, made a permanent roadbed. The winter's settling would have it ready for the final surface of dirt after the spring rains. The negroes worked for a dollar a day; and Paul often observed disgustedly, after inspection of the day's work, that four-fifths of the job had been done before eight-thirty, when he left for the office in the city.

Pelham, just beyond his ninth birthday, found his spare time provided for. He spent his afternoons and Saturdays assisting in the overseeing of the grading.

His father believed in getting him to work young. The mountain would be his some day,—his and his brother's and sisters',—it was none too soon to begin now to learn its problems.

When not at school, he was started in, before six o'clock, at weed-picking. Nell and Sue, and even the baby, could help here, when the work was near the house. In order to give a material incentive, the children were paid one cent a bucket for the weeds. Their earnings were banked with their mother, who kept the accounts in a little red book, an object of especial reverence to the involuntary depositors.

Pelham was especially sharp at locating the big weeds, their roots matted with moist earth, and spreading fan-like over the rocks never far below the surface. Five or six of these, and his bucket was full. Then he would lie on his back, dreaming, his body registering, through the blue cotton pants and thin shirt, each rock and hump on the ground. He followed the clouds sailing, like misty Argoes, over the placid blue sea of sky; he watched the crimson-capped woodpeckers tapping industriously at a nearby oak or hickory trunk, or the bouncing flight of flickers from clump to clump of bluegum and white-gum, or the distant descending spirals of a lazy buzzard, answering some noisome summons to a hidden and hideous feast.

"How you gettin' 'long, Pell? My second bucket's full, an' Susie's almost finished."

He would reluctantly carry his weeds to the pile, and go back to the work and his dreaming.

He was a problem to his energetic father. He would start industriously enough, but the day's toll always fell far below what was expected. The parents had many conferences over him.

"I don't know what to make of the boy, Mary. I never

used to loaf like Pelham does. He's as bad as a nigger."

"He's only a boy, Paul."

"He's got to learn to work."

The mother sighed.

The son received ten cents a week for keeping the bedrooms supplied with coal. Several nights he had been routed out of bed, and made to stumble down to the coalhouse, while his father impatiently held the lantern, to do the neglected task. He was perpetually losing things. Hammers, saws, dewed in the morning grass, a saddle that he had forgotten to hang up,—these would furnish damning indictments of his carefulness.

To teach him responsibility, the three newly-purchased crates of Leghorns were put in his charge. Many a time a dried water-trough or a suspiciously pecked-up chicken-run, its last grain of corn consumed, brought him into trouble. Perhaps he had spent the afternoon whittling a dagger, or carefully cleaning an old horse-skull discovered under the green valley pines. He was very proud at the idea of possessing the chickens, and grew fond of them; but remembering to attend to them was a very different matter.

"I don't never have any time for myself, mother," he would complain, after a scene with Paul. "The Highland boys don't have to work all the time."

"Your father is very busy, Pell; if you don't help him, who will?"

Continued repetition of these negligences caused tingling reminders to be applied to the boy. Paul hated to whip his son; he almost despised himself for causing suffering to a smaller human; but what was he to do? Pelham grew familiar with the feel of his father's belt; and still did not, or could not, change his ways.

He could hardly remember when there had not been some friction between them. Consciously and uncon-

sciously he patterned himself after his father in many things. Paul was jolly and companionable, whenever he wished to be; he was an unusually clean representative of a class that prided itself upon its chivalry and courage. These traits the boy followed.

Then, too, his father had shown him inordinate attention, as the first son, ever since his birth. This masculine approval, added to the adulation of adoring women relatives, exalted his already high opinion of himself, made him selfishly demand more than his share.

His mother's love, for instance,—there were times when he wanted to feel he had all of it. When his father was off on business trips, he became, young as he was, the head of the house. It fretted him to be reduced again to a humble subordinate position.

He could sleep in Mary's room, when Paul was away; this privilege he lost on the return. He hardly realized how this tinged his thoughts with dislike of the father. The parents had a vast, almost a godlike, part in his life,—as in the lives of all children. Whatever daily good or ill he received, came primarily from them; his own efforts counted only as they pleased or displeased the deities. What he did not receive, he blamed upon his father; and he often dwelt upon the happy home life should Paul die, or disappear. He could earn a living for mother, and make a loving home for her. . . .

These things created an unseen and growing breach between the two.

When he first came to Adamsville, Paul had had to go out and make business for himself. He had allied himself to James Snell, a fidgety, pushing real estate operator who was familiar with the newcomer's success in Jackson. "The Snell-Judson Real Estate and Development Company" came into existence; Paul joined the Commercial Club, the Country Club, and met here as

many people as he could. Before the winter was over, he found his hands full. Perpetual application to the complications of real estate problems throughout the county was wearing; which made him less liable than ever to put up with Pelham's shortcomings. As the spring grew on, and the matter did not mend, he called his son into his room early one morning. "You left the cow-gate unlatched last night, Pelham."

The boy sensed the gravity of his father's tone, and grew at once apprehensive. "I thought I shut it, father——"

"Peter had to spend an hour looking for them, this morning. This is the second time in a week."

The boy became voluble. "The other time, father, you know I told you——"

"Yes, you told me. You're always telling me. Did you take that scythe down to be sharpened yesterday?"

"I meant to—I'll take it this afternoon, sure."

"You'll take it before you go to school this morning."

"Father,—if I'm tardy,——"

"You can explain to Professor Gloster you made yourself late."

The boy's lip pouted; a whimper trembled behind it.

"Twice this week you've failed to hoe the spring garden. Do you know who watered your chickens last night?"

Pelham was silent. The list was growing too large to explain away, apt as he had become in excuses.

"I had a talk with your mother yesterday." The father sat on the edge of his bed, his eyes down, thumping a yard-stick against his left thumb.

So it was going to be the yard-stick! That wouldn't hurt,—not like the belt, or a hickory switch, anyway. Pelham began to frame his voice for the proper mingling of crying and entreaty. The more you seemed to be

hurt, the less you got. Only, you had to take the first two or three quietly, or father would see through you.

The elder walked over to the bureau, and placed the measure beside the rose-shears and the spraying can. No, it was not going to be the yard-stick. The boy looked furtively around; there was no other weapon in sight.

Paul continued, "Your conduct bothers your mother as much as it does me. We don't know what to do with you. You're almost ten now, . . . old enough to be trusted. You know you can't be. Your mother thinks I ought to give you another chance. I promised her I would." His tones grew crisper, more biting. "I know what's the matter with you. You're dog mean. You think you can impose on me. I know it. And I'll have no more of this slovenly work-dodging around my place."

He had worked himself into a rage, by this time; but his tones were icily cold and correct. "This confounded laziness has got to stop. It's your job to stop it, do you hear? And if you don't do it within a week,—you know I mean what I say,—I'll thrash you every morning, until you do!"

He rose menacingly. Pelham shrank from him.

"I'm not going to touch you,—this morning. I promised your mother I wouldn't. But this is a last warning."

For the first few days, the son's conduct was unimpeachable. He attended strictly to his duties, and accomplished all of them passably. But one afternoon, he stopped at the foot of the hill to play ball with the East Highland boys, and entirely forgot to leave an order for linseed oil and chicken-feed at the food store near the livery stable. When Saturday came, he worked irritably around the tomato plants until eleven o'clock. Then he sneaked off to Shadow Creek with some boys from the Gloster School. He was back by four, and tried desperately to finish his tasks by nightfall; but sev-

eral were forgotten entirely. When no punishment followed, he grew careless again.

Paul was detained at the office Monday night. Just before eleven, the telephone's tinkle aroused Mary. "Coming right away, dear."

With a start she wondered if Pelham's tasks had been performed. She made the rounds. Not a thing done! Skuttles empty, water-trough unfilled, and the hungry chickens pecking desperately among the hard pebbles in the run, after her light had aroused them. There would be time for her to do them, if she hurried. . . .

She had hardly finished washing coal-grime and cracked cornmeal from her hands, when Paul's call sounded in front.

Through the opened front door came his faint voice. "Come down to the steps, Mary." She caught up the lantern, and picked her way down to him.

"I told that boy to oil these hinges, sure, this afternoon. And look at that pile of trash,—he hardly touched it. Here's the shovel. He hasn't done a single chore since I left the mountain."

Mary lighted the way back to the house, thoroughly upset.

Two mornings later, Paul called the boy. "Come into my room, Pelham." The boy followed, a sick feeling at his stomach.

His father twisted a hand within Pelham's shirt-collar, and snapped off his own belt. The loose end of the belt danced and stung against the boy's bare legs. His father's words came to him brokenly and explosively. "Pay no attention to what I say. . . . Your confounded negligence. . . . Continually soldiering on me. You're mean as gar-broth."

By this, Pell gave way entirely. The agonizing pain burnt his bare calves, and radiated up his legs. He

punctuated the blows with sobbing explanations, and promises never to let it happen again. At the intensity of the pain, he tried to intercept the blows with his hands. Half of the time the lashings left red welts on his wrists and arms, and one stroke caught a little finger, twisting it back until he was sure it was broken.

"I'll teach you to impose on your father. . . . You won't obey me, will you? . . ."

At last it was over, and Pelham crumpled, sobbing and shuddering, against the footboard of the bed.

"Go down to the chicken-house, and attend to your work," his father ordered him. Paul Judson, torn with anger and self-disgust, turned back to the boy. "I'm going to thrash you every morning for a month. Maybe that will do you some good."

After a few minutes, gulping down the stinging memories and black bitterness against what he felt was rank injustice, Pelham limped out to his duties. As he watered the hens, and scattered cracked corn before the fuzzy yellow balls scratching around them, waves of self-pity flooded him. He wept into the chicken-trough and into his handkerchief, until it was a damp salt-smelly wad.

Morning after morning this kept up. Now it was in his own room, his father's, the stable, or by the spring duck-houses; now a slipper, a shingle, the hated belt, or a freshly cut withe. Once it was the stable broom, which broke over his back at the second stroke,—that morning the whipping ended abruptly. He wept, pleaded, excused himself, begged to have another chance; nothing could shake the stern will of his father, and the merciless schedule of pain.

Mary tried to keep busy at some place where she could not hear his cries. But they pursued her from room to room.

Pelham wore his stockings to school,—they hid the

old bruises, and the fresh welts. Night after night he cried himself to sleep. And the mother, stealing in to see the children safely in bed, would feel all the agony seared on her heart, at the sight of the tear-channeled boyish cheeks. She worried and brooded over the favorite son, until bluish depressions pouched beneath her eyes, and a hard look came into them as they followed her husband around his home tasks. He, in turn, became boisterously loud-spoken, and made a vast amount of noise stamping on the halls and porches. It was a gruesome three weeks for all.

At the end of this period, Pelham could stand it no longer. He kissed his mother good night, clinging around her neck and pressing passionate kisses upon her lips,—it would be the last time he would ever receive this parting kiss, he told himself. Then he knotted up, in an old sweater, his clean shirts and a change of underclothes, three handkerchiefs, his stamp album, and "Grimm's Fairy Stories," and hid them under the bed. To-morrow he would leave home forever.

While his mother was seeing to the breakfast table, he slipped into her room, his eyes still red from the morning's session with his father. He unlocked her drawer, and took out of her purse the three one dollar bills he found. On the red book, he knew, he was entitled to more than eight dollars, but this would do. He slipped in a note he had written the night before, and hid the bulging sweater in a rock beside the front path.

Walking to school with Nell, he pledged her to silence and then told her he was going to run away that afternoon.

"That's wicked, Pell." Her wide eyes were horror-filled.

"Would you let them whip you every day of your life?" He turned on her fiercely.

"Where are you going?"

"To Jackson, or Columbus, or somewhere,—anything to get away from here. You'll look after my little chickies, won't you, sister?"

She promised.

The girls were dismissed for lunch at twelve, and as Pelham had only half an hour, their mother usually met them at the big gate, and walked back to the house with them. Nell waited till Sue had run ahead, then betrayed the morning's confidence with maternal conscientiousness.

Mary went at once to her drawer,—she guessed how Pelham had gotten funds. She put on her hat and hurried in to the office, carrying with her the boy's note.

Her lips were set, and her voice difficult to control, when she faced her husband across the bevelled glass that covered his desk. "Read this, Paul," handing him the crumpled message.

It was written painstakingly in the boy's unformed upright script, a youthful imitation of his father's distinctive hand:

> "Dearest mother:—
>
> I can not stand any moar whipings. Hollis can have my things wen he growes up. I will come back as soon as father is ded.
>
> Affexionately your son,
>
> PELHAM JUDSON."

Before he had time to comment, the mother spoke. "You know I advised against this—this brutal, cold-blooded punishment of my son. This is what has come of it."

"Where is he?——"

She bit her lip to keep from crying. "He's gone; he

may be dead, for all I know. He told Nell he might go to Jackson. . . ."

"I'll go down to the station. He can't leave before the 4:17."

"Promise me you won't whip the baby any more. . . ." Her voice shook, in spite of herself. "I'll go with you."

He shook his head. "I'll study it out. . . . I'd better go alone."

At the far end of the waiting-room,—it lacked half an hour to train-time,—he saw at once the slight figure. Pelham had invested in a bag of bananas, and was disconsolately eating the second. As he saw his father's figure approaching, he wilted weakly back in the seat.

"Going away, Pelham?"

"Yes, sir."

He was surprised at the lack of interest in his father's voice.

The older man sat down beside him, and spoke carefully. "As soon as you want to leave home, Pelham, you may. If you're going to Jackson, or anywhere else, father'll be glad to write on and see that you get a job of some kind. But you are pretty small to be starting out now."

The boy choked a wordless assent.

"I think you'd better come home to-night, and think over the matter. If you want to go to-morrow, I'll be glad to help."

Pelham rose obediently, clutching the draggled bundle, and slipped a confiding hand into his father's. Nothing was said about the whippings; they ceased.

V

WHEN summer came, Pelham spent his vacation at Grandfather Barbour's home. He made the journey alone, in the conductor's care.

Joyfully he hopped out at the station, and drove up the leisurely oak avenue to the big house. He had his own cool little room again, fragrant with the honeysuckle blossoms beneath the window, and the scent of peach blossoms from the near end of the orchard.

Every summer that he could remember, he had spent with these adored grandparents. Edward Barbour and his young wife had come to Jackson two decades after the first Judson. At first their home had been only a large bedroom and dining-room. Then a porch had been added, and two more rooms to the south, where the orchard began now. The first pantry had been the piano box, connected by a shed to the kitchen and back porch. The north wing had followed, and the upstairs,—until now the sectional house fitted so well into the trees and vines, that it seemed to have sprouted and grown as easily and naturally as they.

His cousins, Alfred, his own age, and Lil, a year younger, came up every day while he stayed here; Uncle Jimmy's house was visible beyond the last pear tree, down nearer the Greenville Road.

There were strawberries in the garden, big luscious fruit soppy with the dew and gleaming like scarlet Easter eggs in the damp leaves.

He learned to help old Dick harness up the buggy, or

watched 'Liza spurt the warm creamy milk pattering into the wide-mouthed pails.

After breakfast, Grandma let him trowel in the pansy or salvia beds,—her flowers were the talk of the neighbors,—and she gave him a little bed of his own, where portulacca, larkspur, sticky petunias, star-flowered cypress vines, and rose-geranium and heliotrope slips formed a crowded kaleidoscope of shape and color.

There were other occupations for restless mind and fingers. His father might have laughed at his sewing, and openly despised him for it. But Grandmother took time from her embroidery to teach him the briar-stitch and cat-stitch, and the quick decoration of the chain. His mother kissed the grimed, badly embroidered pansy and wild-rose squares that were folded into his occasional happy notes.

On rainy days the children played indoors. Spools,—was there ever such a house for spools! Grandmother had been saving them since the war. Endless cigar boxes rattled with spools of all sizes, big red linen thread ones, handy middle-sized ones, baby silk-twist bobbins. These were emptied upon the sitting-room floor: houses, trains, forts, whole cities flourished in the narrow boundaries of the rag carpet. Grandfather kept crayons, scissors, and a store of old Scribners' and Harpers', which were his without pleading. And parchesi boards, and backgammon—the place was a paradise to the boy.

He delighted in long rambles with his grandfather. The old gentleman, after the war, had combined managing his small farm with running the main village store in Jackson. He had long given up the latter; his simple, honest Christian methods of dealing with his neighbors had been supplanted by more up-to-date ethics, although the store's old name was preserved.

The two visited the corn and cotton fields behind the

house, the level swards of the pebbly river, the solemn privetted walks throughout the cemetery. Here generations of dead Jacksonians restfully scattered into the prolific, dusty mother that gave them birth.

Pelham learned much on these walks,—the birds, trees, stories of dead heroes, episodes of the war, and the stirring times when the raiders had overrun the village. Grandmother had hidden two brothers, one wounded, for weeks in her cellar, all unknown to the Northern visitors who forced themselves upon her. The boy absorbed indiscriminately the accumulated store of eighty years of active life.

After supper, the sweet-faced grandmother would slip a knitted wrap over his shoulders, and walk out with him in the great oak-surrounded square before the house. She taught Pelham how to find the North Star, from the bottom of the Big Dipper; and then the Little Dipper, that had been twisted back until the Milky Way spilled from it. He learned to recognize the big Dragon waddling across the summer heavens, and many of the dwellers in the strange skyey menagerie. These were days and nights of wonder and beauty.

He longed to stay here forever, away from the acidity of his father's commands, and the ever-present fear of the belt. But as the autumn came, he wept his farewells and went back.

Until his return from that first absence at Jackson, he did not realize how the mountain had claimed him. He maintained a mild, glowing regard for the grandparents' plantation; it was free from the irksome paternal irritations that scarred his home days. But its appeal did not go down to the deepest parts of him.

With the mountain it was different. Not merely Hillcrest Cottage, although he felt bound to every board and stone of it; not even merely the Forty Acres, the family

name for the fenced, pathed, and parked half of the original eighty on which the house stood; but the whole mountain, its rises and unexpected hollows, and the thicketed valleys that drooped sharply away toward the East,—he responded to all of these. The rest of the Judsons had taken the cottage and the Forty as their home. But this was only a small part of home to the eldest son.

The mountain became his castle, his playground, his haven of refuge, the land of his fancy. He was its child, and it was his mother.

He got along better with his father that winter. Diligent application to his school work and his tasks at home was the price of liberty on the mountain. Two weekday afternoons, and Sunday after midday dinner, were allowed him. He filled every minute of these respites.

The little Barbour cousins spent Thanksgiving week with the children. Pelham showed them all the treasured spots on the mountain. To them, even the walk up the hill was an adventure, as they explored the long sloping dummyline road, through stiff palisades of golden rod and Flora's paint-brush, the stalks silver-dusty from the nipping November winds, and ready to scatter at the tentative poking of a rotting stick, or the breath of a skimmed stone.

One wonderful picnic they had to Shadow Creek, before the relatives returned home. All drove over in a wagon to the deserted mill dam, Aunt Sarah, grumbling her good-humored threats to return to Jackson and leave "dis mountain foolishness," riding along to mind the children. Jimmy learned the first few swimming strokes in the cool, brownish pond; Pelham and the older girls had long been going in regularly with their father, and were fast becoming expert.

A baby came in April,—another boy, named Edward after Mary's father. This kept the mother from joining their rambles, so it was necessary for Pelham to devise the games without her resourceful assistance.

Here the boy's impelling imagination, added to his knowledge of fairy stories, came to his aid. All the myth-creating urge of the past moved in him. He peopled the varied crests and valleys with these volatile companions, visible only in the dusk out of the corner of a friendly eye. The V-shaped slope from the gap to the railroad was Dwarfland; Hollis was their prince. Crenshaw Hill, clear to the Locust Hedge, was Yellow Fairyland; a chum, Lane Cullom, a year older than Pelham, assumed leadership over these beings. Black-haired Nell, when she could be got to play, was the princess of the Black Fairies, whose haunts were in the outcrop before Hillcrest Cottage. Sue was anything needed to complete the story,—a mere mortal, the queen of the moon-fairies, or of the rock gnomes. Pelham, himself, in crimson outing flannel cloak, was the king and lord of the Red Fairies. They were the real spirits of the mountain, and of fire, and came in their red chariots down the flaming lanes of the sunset sky, to battle for their dispossessed heritage against all the forces of night and darkness.

The fights were not all bloodless. On one of these assaults, as he charged with brittly reed lances up the precipitous quartz quarry, he stumbled and drove a stiff bit of stubble into a nostril. It bled furiously, until his stained handkerchief was the hue of his crimson mantle. But even the three stitches which the doctor took were only an incident in the noble warfare.

The endless sieges, ambuscades, tourneys and adventures filled volumes—literally volumes; for Pelham wrote, on folded tablet paper, a history of the fairy

occupation of the mountain, copiously illustrated with pencil and crayon. It was one of the regrets of his later years that this history had disappeared completely; even its details vanished from his memory.

Always he directed the sports. They varied with his invention; spear-tilting at barrel hoops around the circle of the daisy bed, bow and arrow warfare at Indian enemies hulking and skulking behind pokeberry bushes, cross-country running to Shadow Creek and back, when he became interested in this at the high school,—these were only a few of the games.

His name-giving had a curiously permanent effect. Dwarfland never lost the title he gave it, nor Billygoat Hill, where he and Lane surrounded a patriarchal billy and almost caught him.

When his father became busied with planning the subdivision of the mountain lands, to throw them upon the market, the imitative boy divided Crenshaw Hill into "Coaldale the Second." He borrowed, without permission, enough deeds and mortgages from the real-estate office to run his city for a year, and acted as seller, probate judge, and clearing gang. The streets, two feet wide, were carefully walled from the lots by the loose outcrop stones. There was a hotel, a court house, a furnace, and multiplying homes and stores.

Finally the sisters and brother lost interest, since only Pelham could untangle the intricacies of the allotments. It was all cleared away three years later by a real clearing gang, although this part of the hill continued to be called Coaldale Second.

The mountain was a lonely place for children, after all. Even though Lane braved the temporary isolation, and the girls occasionally had spend-the-day parties at the cottage, it was usually deserted except for Pelham and his imaginary companions.

He learned all of its moods. There was the plentiful springtime, when it blossomed a flood of unexpected beauty. Rich summer brought blackberries, dewberries, and hills rioting with azalea and jasmine. Autumn furnished muscadines by the creek beds, hydrangeas, and the sudden glory of changing leaves. Winter was a black-boughed multiplication of the hilly vistas.

The boys lived in dog-tents several summers. Old Peter built them a tree house in a big oak near a fallen wild cherry tree; when they slept here, the floor rocked and swung all night; they were like sailors buoyed upon a sea of restless leaves. Thus the nights revealed the mountain as personally and intimately as the days.

This close contact with it had another effect. It cut Pelham off effectually from the city boys, and forced him to a high degree of self-reliance, both as to body and mind. The wiry legs toughened, the arms grew long and able to swing him from bough to bough of the big trees, the shoulders spread strongly apart. His surplus energy was transmuted into an adaptable, powerful body.

Greater than this was the other effect. He felt safe, with the mountain as ally; not even his father could touch him, in its secret haunts. An unconscious sense of self-completeness, a rooted belief in his own and every person's liberty, became an integer of his faith.

Thus he grew away from all other people, except his mother. To her he was drawn closer, particularly when her relationship with Paul grew strained. This had been especially obvious after the birth of Ned, the fifth baby; the father had had sharp words with Mary about it.

"It was all right for Mother Barbour to have six; people had more children then. Two of them died, anyhow. It's different now."

"But, Paul,——" The calloused injustice of it silenced her.

He watched her averted face. "I see Mamie Charlton's getting divorced. Jack got tired of her and her eternal children. I saw her the other day. . . . She's getting old. Too many children responsible for it."

She flinched dumbly before his brutality.

He spoke savagely, through clenched teeth. "It's your fault. You ought to be more careful."

Her womanhood rose in rebellion. "Any time you're tired of me, Paul,——"

"It's easy to talk." He laughed abruptly. "And since the business is doing so well, there are always younger women,——"

He did not finish—her look silenced him.

With no woman to confide in, Mary turned to her son, rather than to the girls. His whole horizon was filled with love for her mellow brown-eyed beauty, and for the mothering mountain that came to stand for her in his fancies.

On the walks with his father, Paul's mind was filled with thoughts of the planned development of the land for residential purposes, while Pelham was busied with fantasies of fairies and knightly escapades. Father and son were continually jarring over little things; the estrangement widened.

"I think we'll continue the gap road as an avenue to the railroad tracks. Logan Avenue, we'll call it. Mr. Guild thinks that would be a good place."

"Down Dwarfland?"

The father was plainly irritated. "'Dwarfland' . . . what poppycock! Why can't you get your head down to business, Pelham?"

He would meekly smother his wandering imagination, and listen to long monologues about grading, restricted allotments, and similar boring topics.

The father's sympathy went no further than to approve, in the boy, the things which the man himself liked. His son should naturally take to those things which the father cared for. Fishing trips to Pensacola or beyond Ship Island, which Pelham enjoyed more for the novelty of scenes and faces than for the tedious sport, called forth Paul's gusty admiration when the boy succeeded in holding to a game mackerel, or in a skillful handling of spade fish or mullet. The boy's undistinguished prowess in swimming and tennis, his fumbling success with a shotgun after bull-bats or meadow larks, were magnified in the father's eyes.

The pleasures that Pelham devised for himself were scoffed at. The imaginative reliving of knightly days or frontier activities was as distasteful to Paul's matter-of-fact mind as the embroidering at Grandmother Barbour's. The boy's collecting craze found no response in the parent; when the haphazard interest in tobacco tags, street-car transfers and marbles gave way to a real absorption in stamps, that consumed the son's spare money and time voraciously, Paul issued a ukase on the subject. "Get rid of them. Collect money, as I do, if you want to collect anything."

Pelham rehashed his arguments. "They teach you geography, and history. . . ."

"They're trash; cancelled stamps, worth nothing."

"People pay lots for some stamps."

"You've got something else to think about. Sell 'em, or give 'em away; get rid of 'em. You understand?"

Pelham finally sold them to a local barber, from whom he had bought many of the unused South American specimens. "Sure, I buy 'em," Mr. Lang smiled. He went through the scanty pages, repeating all his stock jokes: "You're a guy, and a pair of guys," as Uruguay and Para-

guay were reached, being his favorite. "They're not worth much to me. Tell you what, I give you thirty-two dollars."

The boy had to be content with this.

Less than a year later, he surreptitiously bought back the collection for forty, keeping them concealed in a corner of the attic.

The third summer brought weekly target practice upon the mountain. This grew out of a lynching at nearby Coaldale, following a brutal assault upon a white miner's wife by a negro. The Judson arsenal contained three rifles, several shot guns, and half a dozen revolvers; they were all put into use in the hollow behind Crenshaw Hill. The girls of course took part, and Mary, a good shot, thereafter carried her pistol in her handbag whenever she went to the foot of the hill. An exaggerated account of this spread among the negroes; only the boldest vagrant would think a second time of daring the unerring gunfire of the Judsons.

This constant reminder of the danger to women, from men, drove the boy's mind to consider this problem. Pelham had matured slowly; his mother had been his chief sweetheart, as long as he could remember. But the association with girls at the new Highlands High School made the matter more personal to him. With eager avidity he took to whatever reading he could find upon the subject. There were pages in his presentation Bible, and in an old "Lives of the Popes," that were creased and yellowed from his frequent reading.

Occasional newspaper stories moved him strangely. He lay awake almost all of one night, on the canvas cot in a tent near the crest, going over the details of one of these accounts that he had torn out of a paper and kept folded up in his purse. It was from some upstate village, —and the house servants of the mistress had aided in

the attack upon her. What would he have done if he had been near? Usually he portrayed himself as the rescuer, nobly driving off the wicked assailants. But infrequent gusts of emotion colored his fancies differently: he saw himself successively in the rôle of each of the participants. He particularly dwelt upon the woman's part. If he were only a girl now,— His body warmed at vague visions of surrender.

He was a clean boy, in the main, bodily and mentally. His mother had impressed purity upon him, as a thing to be always striven for; and he had implicitly followed her, as far as he was able. This conversation with Mary was connected, although he did not know it, with an incident that had happened at Jackson on one of his earlier visits there, when Aunt Lotta, Jimmy's mother, had found him under the porch hammock with Lil—two babies beginning to scorch their untaught fingers at the bigger fires of life.

There had been no punishment for this. Aunt Lotta had merely told the children that only common boys and girls were naughty. This had been enough.

Several years afterwards, when the cousins had visited the mountain,—Pelham was hardly ten at the time,—his mind had been somewhat disturbed by the loose talk of the bragging East Highlands boys. He had discussed it with Lil on the comfortable pampas grass above the chert quarry not far from the cottage.

"You know, Lil, all the boys and girls we know do these things. . . . Think how bad I would feel, if I were with a girl, and didn't know how! If we could find out . . . together. . . ."

"I suppose it would be all right, Pell."

That, however, was all that had come of it.

Now he had reached his last year at the high school. His marks had been good, particularly in mathematics

and English Literature. It had long been assumed that he was to go to college, and fit himself to assist his father's business in civil or mining engineering. He wanted to go to the state university, but Paul's larger plans included a northern education; after much balancing of catalogue advantages, Sheffield Scientific School, at Yale, was decided upon.

Most of this summer too was spent at the grandparents' place; but he came home early, to help his mother get his things ready for the longer separation.

The last night, before his departure, when Mary came in for the customary kiss, they conversed restrainedly at first. Soon she was crying, and he was sobbing as if his throat would break.

"Mother's little boy! I don't know who I will turn to, when you're so far away."

"It won't be for long, mother. And I'll write all the time."

He went to sleep finally, his head pillowed upon her breast, as when he had been her baby, her only son.

She could not go to the station to see him off,—there was so much to be done on the mountain; but he held her tightly against him for a long, long hug and kiss, and walked bravely away.

He sat down on the big stone by the dummy gap-gate. A racking tendency to cry tore at his throat. He was a man, going out into the world of men. He beat the rock with clenched hands.

He was not bidding good-by to his mother, and the mountain. He shut them from him when he went to sleep each night; in the morning they were his again. This was only a longer separation. He was going north not to leave them, but to make himself a better son of his mother, a better son of the mountain. He would return, and then,—

One of his youthful magic rites came to him. Standing on his toes, facing the mountain,—stretching to his full height, with head thrown back and hands spread above his head, he posed, a taut, slim figure, poised beneath climbing tree-trunks of gray, and the leafy clouds above them. For a long moment the world stood still for him. This was his farewell and his benediction.

He slung his raincoat over his shoulder, adjusted the tennis racket and shiny suit-case in his left hand, and passed through the gate.

VI

THE temporary heroic mood, that had marked his departure from the mountain, wilted on the long railroad journey. He was very lonely at first, in New Haven. The town was dead and deserted, as he took the entrance exams. In the interval of uncertain waiting, he brought out his disused stamp album, and spent solitary evenings rearranging every stamp in the book.

With the next week, he began to feel at home. Every train vomited a riot of eager boys,—recent alumni back for the opening fun, self-conscious upper classmen, timid beginners like himself. The excitement of making new friends, and learning the immemorial lore of Yale. pulled him out of his shell of seclusion. He became one of the crowd, an atom swirling through unaccustomed channels of a fresh social body

He grew at once into Sheff's boisterous feeling of superiority over the placid, plugging Academic grinds. He snorted when compulsory chapel was mentioned. Why, he would be a junior next year. when these staid classical freshmen would be mere sophomores. That was what Sheff did to a fellow!

His letters home were full of imposing details, gathered at second hand. There was no place like this in the world!

The first big night came,—the night of the Sheff Rush. Pelham felt a peculiar interest in it. He was not very athletic, although in wrestling, as in cross-country work, he was above the average. And this occasion was sacred to the wrestlers.

His wrestling pictures, dating from Adamsville days, had been properly admired by his room-mate, Neil Morton, a strapping, likable Texan, who had prepped at Hill. Pelham, a mere graduate of a city high school, could not expect to be ranked with the products of Lawrenceville, Taft, Hill and St. Paul's.

After the heavy-weights and middles had been annexed by the juniors, there was a lull. No freshman lightweight could be located.

Neil rose to his feet. His yearling bellow rang over the heads of the crowd. "Judson! Try Judson, here!"

Another group was singing out, "Claxton! Claxton! We want Claxton!"

Others near him joined Morton's cry. "Judson! Pell Judson!"

Claxton did not materialize.

The new crew captain squatted under the nearest torch, and peered at the group. "Judson there?"

Pelham, protesting and nervously laughing, was shoved forward, stripped by the big Y'd team men, and edged into his corner. He found himself facing Ted Schang, of last year's wrestling squad, one of the promising lightweights of the University.

The derisive juniors gobbled their war cry. "Go it, Teddy boy! At 'im! Eat up the dam' frosh!"

Teddy ate him up, the first fall, by a swift half Nelson, and a quicker recovery when Pelham tried to turn over and wriggle out.

"Yea 'Twelve! Kill 'im!"

In the brief rest, he ground his fingers into his palms, and determined to show what 'Thirteen could do. He was the crest of the class wave for the moment; an aching loyalty shook him.

This time he was more cautious. The team sub was confident now, and left a careless opening, which Pelham

seized at once. After a long, tough tussle he won; but this left him winded; so that the third fall, and the match, went to the upper classman. But he had won one fall; and he was a figure in his class from that night.

His mother was inordinately proud of the boy's participation. Her elaboration of his night-letter home, which she wrote to her sister, fell later into his hands, and he shook delightedly over it. "Think of the honor, Lotta! Selected from all of Yale to represent his school on the opening week, and landing the second fall in the whole University! We are surely proud that God has given us such a strong, manly son. Paul is very pleased, and is sending him a check for fifty. Jackson can show those Yankees something yet."

Paul's pride showed in more definite and characteristic fashion. He had a story run in the *Times-Dispatch,* and the *Evening Register;* Pelham's picture headed the account, which stressed the fact that he was a product of the local high school, "the son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Judson, of Hillcrest Cottage, and a grandson of Judge Thomas F. Judson, the distinguished jurist of Jackson." All these things advertised the family, and the business.

Neil Morton was frankly critical. "Do they do that sort of thing in Adamsville often, sonny? Why didn't your old man run his own cut too, and a picture of home sweet home, with the Judson family grouped around a lawn-mower in the front yard? Pass her over!"

But Pelham shame-facedly held on to it; and both clippings were later pasted into his scrap-book.

At the end of a hard year, Pelham, fully three inches taller, counted the days before he got home to his mother and the mountain.

He enjoyed the mountain as never before, in the summer following. At New Haven, his had been the subordinate lot of the hundreds like himself. Only un-

usual qualities could hold the top there; and he, younger than most in his class, was far from the envied heights. Once these younger sons scattered to their home cities and villages, their importance grew amazingly. Adamsville held young Judson to be in a fair way of becoming the biggest man in the northern university.

His home became an appendix to the Country Club, as the festive center of the younger crowd. The tennis courts were never out of use; sport frocks and flannel trousers peopled them from eleven till dusk fell. Along the bridle paths leading to the road and beyond, the leaves were set dancing by laughing couples; benches and rustic seats beneath flowering rhododendrons, beside the winding lanes of the Forty Acres, invited languorous love-making. And after a brisk session of men's doubles, the pool which Hollis had urged and finally constructed, below the chilly chalybeate spring behind the cottage, was better than all the club showers in the world.

Both of the sisters were popular. Nell danced well, and never lacked eager escorts. Sue, on the contrary, had no outstanding good feature. Her brown hair was somewhat sandy, her nose turned up a trifle, and she was not as quick-witted as the other Judsons. But the girls realized she was safe; there was no fear she would annex any of their suitors, and she shared the confidences of at least half a dozen best friends at all times.

Early in the summer, Pelham was paired with one of these intimates, Virginia Moore. The girl was tall and slim, almost gawky. Her habit was to serve a direct overhand ball, then permit her partner to win the point. Her caustic tongue made her generally disliked; but he found this an alluring novelty, after the insipid small talk of the others.

When the set was over, he led her to his chosen rock seat carved out of the outcrop beyond the gap. The

talk became personal, Virginia shrewdly deferring to his superior masculinity, with flattering attention.

At last his stumbling tongue blurted out, "V-virginia, do you want to wear my frat pin?"

She hesitated, and smiled encouragingly.

He blushed under his heavy tan. "We can only give it to mother, or sister, or—or—or the girl we . . . we're engaged to."

"Well, we're not related." She twisted a spray of hydrangea into her hair.

He unpinned the black enameled symbol, his heart jumping violently, and moved closer. With a pretty gesture, she indicated where he should place it.

The cool fragrance of her made him giddy. One loose strand of hair brushed against his forehead, causing him to tingle and tickle all over. . . . He wanted to bruise her against his body, as on mad moonlit nights he had flung himself around some rough-barked oak on the summit. Ignorant that girls, not in books, at times felt such emotions, he affixed the pin with impersonal decorum. Then he slid to the ground beside her feet, and stared against the burning sunset.

When the sun dropped back of his hill, he rose gropingly. It was hard to phrase some things; he was desperately anxious not to appear ridiculous in her eyes. Yet, unless all of his reading was wrong, something more was expected of a man in love.

"I—I ought to kiss you, if we're engaged."

She closed her eyes, docilely.

He held her lithe cool body, and he felt the rapture of brushing his lips against her own.

He led the way down the path, exaggeratedly attentive.

For the remainder of the brief summer he spent every spare moment with the girl,—mornings on the courts,

long afternoon walks, whispering evenings in the rock seat. He would come home after a day with her, and lie, tumbling sleeplessly on his bed, living over the delicious last moments spent with her, and elaborating intenser fantasies of love-making. Her eyes obsessed him; they were like his mother's.

Another friendship marked the summer. Old Nathaniel Guild did not come to the place as often as before; the winter had been hard on him, and the steep paths were often too much for his frail strength. As Paul was kept close to his desk, it was the son who accompanied Guild on his infrequent rambles over the grounds, and the rougher land beyond the fence.

"You notice the tilt of these outcrop rocks, Pelham?" he asked, one afternoon. "They slant forty degrees on this hill, and forty-four beyond Logan Avenue, on the other hill. Last week I was over beyond West Adamsville; all of these strata are there; only they angle to the west, instead of to the east, as here. Like this."

He diagrammed roughly on a sheet in his note book.

"Here are the two Ida veins,—the big veins here; here is the soft hematite under them, and a thin harder vein. Then comes bedrock, and under it a heavy clay deposit. Above the Ida vein there was quartz,—the same quartz we take from the back of the place. Now, on the west part of town,"—he indicated with sweep of his hand the hazy distance beyond the furnaced city,—"there the same strata were once. But the erosion has gone further. There is only a trace of the quartz, and the three top veins. Only a few thin streaks of the bottom hard ore are there. Even the bedrock has been washed off some of the hills. . . ."

Pelham nodded.

"If we could have gotten hold of that iron too! . . . All gone, all washed away."

"How does it happen that the strata are the same?"

Nathaniel looked at him sharply from under bushy gray eyebrows. He turned again to the paper, and continued the two lines until they met, high above what was now Adamsville.

"Wait. . . . This point is the sand hills,—there to the east. There are more of them beyond the West Highlands range. See,——" and a firm stroke of the pencil continued their lines until they arched above the former peak.

Pelham watched the moving pencil, fascinated.

"Was the mountain ever like that?"

"The rocks are absolute proof. This valley,"—he gestured toward the city,—"was once the hidden center of the hill."

". . . How long ago?"

Nathaniel chuckled gently. "Ah, that's beyond us. Hundreds of thousands of years, maybe."

Somehow this made the mountain more real to Pelham. Though he might climb, under the midnight stars, to the highest crag on Crenshaw Hill, he was just at the beginning of what had once been the peak. He fancied he could trace its towering crown, blacker than the surrounding blackness, lifting up to the sky and the sparkling stars.

What a fleeting second of time, to the mountain, were the eighteen laborious years that meant so much to him! This hill would continue to jut toward the clouds when the last trace of man's restless activity had crumbled into dusty forgetfulness.

He formed the habit of circling up to these crags, after a night at the club or the park with Virginia. They supplied the needed solitude for his crammed fancies. Some nights, after he had been with her, his body would burn like a torch. The pelting passion that shivered through-

out him frightened him. He needed the mountain and the stars to calm him for bed. Love was becoming an overmastering torrent; it threatened to upset his whole equilibrium.

His father got wind of the affair, through some chance comment. He went straight to the point with the boy. "You're seeing a lot of that Moore girl, Pelham."

"Yes, sir. . . . I like her."

"L. N. Moore has four daughters, all unmarried. He is worth about twenty-five thousand dollars. That's all they will get."

"I—I hadn't ever thought about that, father."

"You've got to think about it. Here Tom Dodge's children have married millions—every one of them. Sarah married Jack Lamar; he owns the steel works. The boys connected with the Vanderventer and the O'Ryan money. There's an intelligent family."

Pelham got hot all over. He muttered something about not marrying for money.

"Who wants you to marry for money?" his father interrupted. "The Dodge crowd managed to fall in love with folks who had money. It's a big difference. I'm going to leave the girls well fixed; they ought to marry well. I want you to keep your eyes open."

The talk left a bad taste in Pelham's mouth.

Even though his mother did not care for Virginia as much as he had thought she would, his attentions continued until vacation ended, and he returned to the muggy northern city.

Nell responded to the open life almost as fully as Pelham. Hollis was busy at school, and Sue preferred staying with her mother; so the older sister frequently had her favorite mare saddled, and covered fifteen miles before she turned the horse loose in the spring lot.

Paul was on the mountain frequently, mornings and

afternoons; Hillcrest Subdivision had at last been put upon the market. Most of the work fell on his shoulders; his roadster buzzed up and down the avenues, displaying the place to prospective purchasers. The lower lots sold well from the start. After six months, the investment had almost paid for itself, with less than an eighth of the land disposed of.

In the early spring, Nathaniel came to Paul with a proposition to take the land off the lists as residence property, until the iron could be mined.

"As soon as we sell any of the crest places, it will be too late. Now's the time; we can form our own mining corporation, and sell to South Atlantic Steel. Ore's reached the highest point in twelve years. It will mean a fortune, Paul, and the land will be just as good after the iron's out."

Paul was set against the plan at first. There was more ready money in the other; it would spoil the face of the subdivision; they didn't know the ropes.

The older man was insistent. "It'll mean money—big money. We can't overlook a shot like this."

He went over the suggestion for Mary's benefit; she too protested. "Why, Mr. Guild, the mountain's our home; it would be dreadful to spoil it. What would happen to the cottage?"

Paul cut in, shortly; his mind was quickened by opposition of any kind; and the chance for a quiet public dominance of his wife was not to be overlooked. "We don't intend to touch this part of it, Mary. . . . I'll tell you, Nate; we'll go over it with Ross and Sam Randolph. If there's as much in it as you say, we can't afford to neglect it."

After the visitor had gone, he walked out to the front, and stared at the red smudges that marked the furnaces

and rolling mills. When Mary joined him, a wrap thrown around her shoulders, he was chewing the end of an unlighted cigar. She laid her hand on his arm.

"Paul, dear, you weren't angry at what I said at supper?"

"Of course not. Women can't be expected to look on a business matter as men do."

She shrank from the implied rebuke. "You—you aren't serious about this mining, are you?"

He waved toward the dark foot of the hill with the cigar. "D'ye know what we cleared from the bottom of the Crenshaw lands, Mary, on these first sales?"

She was silent.

"Our share was ninety thousand dollars! And the place didn't cost fifty."

"I'm sorry to see any of it go, Paul. It would make such a wonderful home for our children—when they're grown up and married, and have their own little homes within reach——"

He crushed the cigar beneath his heel. "You're much too sentimental, sometimes, Mary. The children wouldn't thank me to hold on to the land, when I can get a hundred and ten a foot for inside lots."

"We have all the money we can possibly use now, Paul. You must have made a hundred and fifty thousand this year——"

"That hardly touches it."

"It makes me afraid, sometimes—our having so much, when so many people have so little. If we could just keep Hillcrest as it is——"

"We haven't anything," he answered sharply. "Jack Lamar and his brother came here just before I did; they've five million apiece. And God only knows how much Russell Ross has made out of iron. He's in with

that South Atlantic Steel bunch; he could sell out for twenty-five millions to-morrow, I verily believe. . . . I'd be lucky to get a million."

She stubbornly returned to what was on her mind. "And now you are willing to take this wonderful estate you have worked over for ten years, and throw it away, because Russell Ross has more money than you! Think what the Rosses were."

"My father wouldn't have wiped his shoes on them. And any one of them could buy out Jackson three or four times now. This mountain—if it's handled right—it will simply mint money. It will be a mountain of gold."

She shuddered. "Paul——"

"I can imagine what you would say, if I hadn't made what I have out of it. You spend what I make quickly enough."

"I save everywhere I can——"

"Oh, you, and the place, and the girls; and it costs a lot to keep Pelham going. We need every cent of it. I tell you, this mountain is worth millions! And I won't stop until I've gotten every red cent out of it."

It was in that mood that he went to the conference with the iron men.

One Sunday morning, when the negotiations had been carried over until the next week, Nathaniel's housekeeper phoned that the old man had died shortly before daybreak. Paul took charge of the funeral, saw to the shipping of the body to the Ohio home, and turned the matter over to the lawyers for the estate.

Within a month he had secured his partner's interest in the whole property, and was the sole owner of the mountain.

"If we do mine," he told Mary, "Pelham's mining engineering course will make him the man for the place. He'll get Nate's share, if he's worth it."

In June Snell and Judson threw open another large subdivision, in a cheaper suburb near Hazelton, and Mr. Snell's incapacity put the burden of this on Paul's shoulders. Further plans for Hillcrest were laid over until he could find time to take them up again.

VII

THE day after the next Thanksgiving, Paul, excited and jubilant, drove up the graveled path to the side door of Hillcrest. "Read those," he pushed three papers into Mary's hands, as she rose from the veranda rocker.

Her eyes blurred, so that she had to take off her glasses, as, sick at heart, she realized what the documents were. Her husband spread them out on her lap, explaining rapidly. "This is the certificate of incorporation of the Mountain Mining Company. Here's my contract with them—I hold fifty-one per cent of the stock, counting twenty shares in your name and one in Pelham's, so we retain the controlling interest—which provides the terms for the taking out of the ore. This last is a carbon of the letter I got off to the boy this morning, giving all the details."

She had lost her fight after all. "The cottage," she whispered, "how long now before we must leave it?"

He slapped a pointing finger at the center of the second paper. "Section seven—here it is—we won't move at all! This part of the mountain is not to be touched, until all the rest is mined. As long as the house stands, we're safe." He smiled, in conscious self-approval.

She raised dimmed eyes. "That's good of you, Paul. It hurts me to see any of it disturbed. . . . I suppose you could do nothing else."

Refolding the sheets, he slipped them into an envelope with enthusiastic finality. "The thing grows bigger and bigger every time I go over it. If it pans out, we can

buy Adamsville! I said a mountain of gold, remember. . . . Ground will be broken in the spring. We'll put Tow Hewin in charge of it now—he's the man poor Nate spoke of—and when Pelham comes back in June, he can put his M. E. degree right into harness. . . . God! It means millions!"

"You're sure the cottage is safe? It would break my heart to think we'd have to give it up. It's such a splendid home for the children——"

He pushed out his lips. "It is a lovely place, Mary; but you've gotten rooted here. By the way, I'll wire to St. Simon's Island to-night for rooms for you and the girls for the summer. It will be a fine change. The children can go, too. Pelham and I will stay on the job here."

Her lips trembled; leave before Pelham came—not see him all summer? . . .

The son's reply was an enthusiastic endorsement of the affair. He had gone over the plan with his father on the previous holiday, before returning to take a year's graduate work, and the enterprise appealed to his imagination. It was sacrilege, in a way—like disemboweling a parent for the money that could be made out of it. But what an invitation to his trained activity! A marvelous chance to show what he was made of.

He explained the project to Neil Morton, who had also returned for graduate work, after a summer's practical experience in a Wyoming smelter.

Neil twisted his shoulders comfortably into the dingy Morris chair. "Your mountain makes me weary, Pell. Morning, noon . . . night. You'd think it was the only ore proposition in the country."

Pelham flushed, but unchecked finished his sentence. "It'll be the biggest plant in the whole South yet."

Neil grinned. "When the Adamsville papers get through with it, I suppose it will."

Pelham abruptly changed the subject. "I met one nice girl last week end, Neil—you would have liked her. Her father's Professor North at Cambridge, and she's full of all sorts of crazy notions. Ruth is a suffragette; wanted to vote, or run for governor, or something."

"Shocking," his friend remarked languidly. He was used to Pelham's reactions.

"Tried to convert me."

There was silence for a few moments, then Neil straightened up in his chair. "Do you realize, Pelham, that in Wyoming, where I summered, women have voted for over thirty years? Why, the mayor of one of the mining towns is a mother who has raised eleven children! Crazy notions, indeed."

Pelham looked disturbed. "They must be bad women, if they vote. Who ever heard of a decent lady mixing up with politics? Think of my mother, or yours, Neil; would you be willing to have her mingle with negroes and common riff-raff at the polls?"

The other exploded at this. "She does! Mother's the best little stump speaker in the county! And Polly's been to two conventions already."

Pelham lighted a handy cigarette. "I always said that Texans were batty."

"What did you do to your suffragist, anyhow?"

"Oh, she had too much coin for my simple taste. If father learned about her, he couldn't talk anything else. . . . Not for mine!"

A rattle of knocks on the door broke off the discussion. Several graduate students pushed into the room. "Hello, Judson. Going out for supper, Neil?"

He stretched himself up, and reached for a cap. "Pell and I were just about to prowl down to Heublein's."

"Come on, then."

As they crossed Chapel Street, the rubber-lunged newsboys were shouting, "All about the big strike! Street car men to quit to-morrow!"

Pelham purchased a smudgy sheet. While the waiter was double-quicking their orders, all eyes were directed at the leading story.

"Look at this," Ralph Jervis, one of the classmates, pointed insistently, "the president of the road says he'll break the strike with college men. Let's take a week off, and be blooming motormen!"

A spectacled Senior dissented at once. "It wouldn't be the thing, fellows. Those strikers may be in the right, for all we know."

Jervis howled his disgust. "That's what comes of joining the Socialist Study Club! Falkhaven's a regular anarchist. Why, it's a great idea! Are you on, Neil?"

"Sure!" The Texan roused himself to answer briskly. "If Pell 'll come too."

"I'm for it," Pelham assented quietly.

The constant deference and affection displayed toward his big-hearted roommate hurt him, against his will. For all his ability in studies and on the mat, Pelham was not popular. He had never been accepted in the higher circles of Sheff life, the Colony and Cloister groups; and he in turn held himself aloof from the run of the class.

He was a thorough-going snob, for all his talk of democracy. Anywhere in the South, which held the finest people in the country, a Judson would be known and recognized, and given his proper place. These Yankees, no matter how nice they might be personally, were Republicans; in the South, only negroes and turncoats belonged to that party. At meetings of the Southern Club, he had seconded the resolution asking that negro students be provided with a separate gym-

nasium and eating hall. It had furnished a week's laugh to the University; hot-headedly, he resented this. He felt that the leading men held him merely on tolerance; he shrank in upon himself.

This feeling of isolation was not entirely unwelcome. He had become used to it in his mountain days. Here it had driven him to the College Library, where he had mastered all its bulky volumes on mining and kindred phases of engineering. He branched from these into higher mathematics, until he could stump his instructor on the fourth dimension. The previous Christmas holiday, he had turned to modern European drama, and had covered what he could find in an amazing short time; although it was not easy to stomach such plays as "The Weavers," and some of Shaw's dramatic maunderings.

His college loyalty, and class loyalty, in the social sense, continued at a high pitch; and he was among the first to arrive at the office of the New Haven Electric, and to sign up for strike-duty.

He spent an intense morning learning the mechanism of the car—it was not difficult, for a good driver; and he knew automobiles thoroughly.

He was put at a controller on the Savin Rock run, with a halfback for his conductor, and two guards furnished by a Newark agency to aid the uniformed policemen in preserving order through the rioting poorer districts.

The resort was reached, and the return made, in a tiresomely unexciting manner. On the second trip out, a crowd had gathered near the turn by the switching yards, which shouted epithets at the green crew.

"They're a bunch uh mouthin' blackguards, mate," the cheek-scarred guard on the front platform observed with alcoholic familiarity. He dodged a spattering tomato

flung jeeringly by a tiny Irishwoman. "All they does is shoot off their mouth."

Pelham found the guard's nearness the main irritation of the ride.

When they neared the same corner on the run in, two women stepped into the street. He slowed the car. They suddenly turned back to the sidewalk. He urged the speed up two notches.

A wagon had been backed across the track. "Clear that off, there." The driver was evidently too asleep, or drunk, to heed.

"You move it," he ordered the guard.

As the man stepped down uneasily, the rush began. Out of the cheap lodging houses and dingy side entrances flooded shouting men, women, children. Bricks, garbage, old bottles thumped against the car sides.

"Better not stop, Judson," the green conductor's shout reached him. "It'll be hot in a minute."

The guard struggled with the heads of the horses. A whirling broom-handle from the sidewalk knocked him against the wheels. He let go the bits, uncertainly.

"Kill the dam' scabs!"

"To hell with 'em!"

"Yah, scabs! Kill the college scabs!"

Pelham swung the heavy switch key dangerously close to the heads of the rioters near the footboard. "Shove off that wagon, there. We're going through."

The horses backed protestingly. The iron rod leapt toward the shrinking crowd. The track was cleared.

Baffled, they surged across the rails in front; car windows were smashed, a turmoil boiled on the rear steps, where policeman and conductor battled with the more incautious attackers. The second guard sneaked off down the alley.

Three or four boarded the front steps. A shrieking woman in the lead caught Pelham's arm. He felt himself dragged toward the door. The swiftness of it dazed him; he could not hit a woman.

"Naw yer don't!" The guard woke up, tore loose the woman with bullying arms. "This rough stuff don't go!" He threw her back into the crowd. An Italian bent at Pelham's feet; a shiny blade snaked toward his leg. He cracked the man's shoulders with the switch key; the knife rang on the cobbles.

Pelham toed the bell vigorously. The car started with a jerk. The front caught one fleeing obstructor, throwing him sideways. Infuriated jeers and howls came from women and children forced aside. A brick splintered the glass at his right, just missing his head. He broke through, and came into the center of the town.

A dispatcher took charge, placed him on a quieter run, and laid off the Savin Rock line for the day.

He compared experiences with the others at supper. Jervis was in the hospital, with a stove-in rib; Neil's ear wore a bandage; others were laid up wholly or partly. Two of the strikers had been shot in an open battle near the station, and a guard killed; the hospitals were filled with minor injuries. The casualty list beat football, they agreed; and it was better sport!

By the next day, the streets were more orderly. Police reserves patrolled the focal spots, with orders to shoot to kill; mobmen were clubbed on the slightest provocation, and arrested wholesale for vagrancy. The station wagons clanged throughout the streets all day. Pelham went back to his first run; there was no further tie-up.

He was switched later to the line Neil was on. This route pushed far into the country, and through the depressing filth of a mill suburb. Jeering lanes of factory

men and women lined the roadway; most of them, Pelham judged from the chatter, must be Polacks. There was one persistent group centered around the tail of a cart. Here a woman gesticulated fiercely beneath a red banner.

A stooping giant of a man, six feet three at least, turned from the speaker's words to shake his fist at the approaching car and scream profanely at its driver. "You lousy scab! You dam' thief!"

Pelham, secure in reliance on the bluecoat beside him, stopped the car. "You're a liar," he said shortly. "Go on about your work, instead of swearing at peaceful citizens."

The man sputtered in frenzy. "This was my run, you——" The profanity spilled recklessly. "Stealing the bread out of working men's mouths, you white-livered scab!"

Pelham turned quickly. "Why don't you arrest that man, officer?"

The protector looked at him coolly; he spat deliberately over the railing. "Fer what? He's only telling the truth. You are a scab, now, ain't you?" He scolded the enraged striker. "Go on, Jimmy. Cool off somewhere. That ain't no way to talk to a motorman from the Yaleses college, that ain't. You don't wanter get run in."

The man cursed himself out of their sight. Pelham drove in more thoughtfully.

Paul, when he learned of it, was not too proud of his son's performance. There was no use in getting one's head cracked unnecessarily, he wrote. But he was as pleased as Pelham at the successful crushing of the strike, which came with startling quickness after the men had been out five days. The union officials made

some agreement with the company, and vanished to Boston. Some of the men were taken back, some were not. Sheff resumed its normal placidity.

"Your life is too valuable, Pelham," said his father's letter, "to risk in direct contact with the white trash that gather when a strike is declared. Some of the men on the mountain are just as worthless and discontented. We know how to handle them here. . . .

"You might visit Senator Todd Johnson when you pass through Washington. He is a good man to keep in touch with.

"Mary and the two youngest got off to St. Simon's Island yesterday. The girls follow on Monday. That will leave us to keep the work up during the summer.

"The first report shows 291 tons from the Forty this month, and nearly as much from the other property. We're getting started slowly.

"I shall be glad when you get back and down to work."

Pelham took the first train South, after commencement was over.

VIII

"WELL, young man, ready to go to work?"

"This morning, father."

Paul took up the extra slack in his belt. "Oh, we won't rush you. You'd better take the first week off and visit the Barbours. They're getting pretty old, Pelham; they'll appreciate it."

"All right, sir."

Paul stopped to examine a badly-hung gate, sagging weakly away from its post. "I'll fire that lazy Peter, if he doesn't 'tend to these hinges better. A cow could push through and eat up five hundred dollars' worth of shrubs before your mother caught on. . . . We'll have you meet some of the men."

They came up behind a stubby, middle-aged Irishman, loudly ordering a group of white workers who were timbering the newest mine entrances. "D'ye want the whole mountain to fall on you? Jam it under that slide rock, man."

At the father's hail he turned genially. "Mornin', Mr. Judson."

"This is the son I was telling you about. Pelham, this is Tom Hewin, who keeps things moving in the mines."

"Pleased to meet you, sir." There was a servile hump to his shoulders; a deprecating instability in his glance greeted the boy. "Hey, Jim." A youth of Pelham's age, an uncertain smile dancing from his eyes, advanced from the overalled workers. "This is my boy, sir. I'm learnin' him to be a boss miner too." Hewin's flattened thumb pointed to Pelham. "Want me to put him to work, sir?"

"He'll report next Monday."

Tom scratched a bristly head. "They'll be plenty for you to do, sir."

"How's that drain in Number 11, Tom?"

Pelham admired his father's vigorous handling of the varying questions. His own opinion was asked about one matter, as they inspected the cut-ins of the ramp cleaving Crenshaw Hill. He backed up Hewin's solution; the facile superintendent promptly flattered the young man's grasp of the problem.

As they walked back to breakfast, Paul shared a further insight into the human element of the work. "Yes, he's a good man to have there. He directed one of the Birrell-Florence mines for two years; quit in some row or other. He doesn't get along too well with his men. I don't trust him; he'll pad the rolls, and undermark the weights, every chance you give him. He'd steal from the niggers and miners, and from me as well, if I'd let him. That's one of the reasons I'll be glad to have you on the job. . . . He gets things done."

"What will I do, father?"

"You're to be his assistant; he'll keep you busy. Fifty a week, to begin with. When you're worth more, we'll increase it."

Pelham's mind played around the conversation all during the trip to Jackson that followed. It was not just what he had fancied, he told himself, staring at the green hump-backed hills along the road. Why should he not be head of the operations? But that could come; he must show his worth first.

There was a persistent shock of disappointment in the amount he was to receive. It was hardly respectable. His allowance since junior year had been five thousand. . . . Well, he could make it do.

His self-complacency returned at the grandparents'. Jimmy, who had still a year in law school, was dazzled by the Sheff product; Lil, who had rounded into ample, magnolia-like beauty, capitulated devoutly. The old people's loving pride warmed him; but its flavor cloyed. He was glad at the end of the week to return his attention to the mountain.

Hewin found the boy quick at observation, and a good listener; the contact evidently suited the Irishman immensely. Now was the chance, he decided, to solidify himself with the Judsons. Pelham became familiar with every detail of the work. He ended with a confused impression that the bustling superintendent had either done every stroke with his own battered hands, or had devised and inspired it.

"They're good workers," he concluded, marveling at the patent energy.

"They'd better be."

With such a spirit, anything was possible. It was only later that he realized that this was surface activity; that the leisurely gait of negroes and whites alike quickened only when the boss was in sight.

The first ramp lay to the north of the house, through what was still called "Coaldale the Second;" the second, on the Logan land south of the gap, was put into his especial care. He bent over blueprints and calculations, verifying what had been planned. Careless bits of figuring were corrected; he found one plot of openings contrary to all reason.

"Your number two will collide with the entry above, Mr. Hewin. Look—it ought to be opposite five, here."

Tom studied the diagram from all angles, then laid it down. "Figurin' ain't everything, Mr. Judson. You've got to know your ground. Bring along them maps."

They mounted above the level where the negroes were timing their pick strokes with a wailing improvised chant, reminiscent of cotton field spirituals.

"See that flaw? All your figgers don't take no account of it. We cut in below here, then bend in to the left. This way. . . . When I was with the Birrell-Florence folks, we went right in under a flaw. The dam' timbers slipped one day, an' we lost four mules, as well as half a dozen niggers. You got to know your ground."

Pelham straightened the line a trifle, corrected the figures, and the cutting went on. The third month showed a marked improvement over the second.

Gradually he noticed that, while there was a great show of deep mining with the first ramp and the delayed second one, the main vigor was bent to the easier dislodging of the outcrop.

He studied the agreements, measured the cleared areas carefully, and carried his discoveries to Paul.

The father took the matter up with Hewin. "How far have you gone to the north, past the mouth of the ramp?"

"About four hundred feet, sir."

"Measure it."

The tape showed five hundred forty.

"By the agreement, you couldn't go beyond four hundred and twenty feet, with eight ramp openings."

"Them damn' niggers must a moved the stob I put in. We won't go no further."

The outcrop-scraping continued fifty feet, before another opening was made.

World-unsettling events were happening, during the weeks when this minor dispute disturbed the serenity of relations on the mountain between owner and contractors. The same day that Pelham reported the repeated trespass on the easy outcrop, the startled papers

told of the vaster trespass across the convenient miles of Belgium, which was bitterly contesting the gray-green flood of alien soldiers. The father turned from the headlines to discuss, with caustic vigor, the annoyance nearer home.

"There's no way to stop it, Pelham. They'll rob the surface, no matter what the contract reads. It's so much cheaper to get at . . . lazy scoundrels! It 'ud take six years in court to settle it. Meanwhile, the mine would be locked up tighter than a barrel."

"You could get damages."

"Not a cent . . . not solvent. Keep your eye on them; we'll play them along. Bad as this war promises to be, somebody's liable to need our iron. Prices must boost; the Hewin contract will hold our cost down. We won't lose."

There were few minds in Adamsville, at this time, that saw even this much connection between the remote struggle and placid home affairs.

In the spring, the third ramp was cut—half a mile to the north, beyond the crest of Crenshaw Hill, through a row of trees called the Locust Hedge. North of its base, on a wide bowl-like opening, the shacks and stockades for certain convict miners were built. Paul's bid for two hundred of the State long termers had been successful; these were isolated near the extreme end of the Crenshaw property, and kept at the deeper mining in the third series of entries.

Nearer Hillcrest, the underbrushed ridge at the foot of the higher peak was cleared, and houses were built for workers who did not live in Adamsville, or Lilydale, the negro settlement saddling the low Sand Mountains. A prong of the mountain shielded the Judson home from this shack town; otherwise the screams, shots, and general disorder around pay days would have driven away the

family. "Hewintown" was the railroad's designation for the flag station below it; "Hewin's Hell Hole" was its usual title.

Here Tom Hewin brought the three hundred miners from Pennsylvania, after he had discharged several gangs who fretted under the talk of union agitators.

Pelham helped erect the larger frame houses for the commissary, the office, and the overseers' homes. Frequently he idled through the two settlements, and tried in awkward fashion to understand the personal side of the workers. They answered civilly questions about their work; when he tried to go further, they drew back, surly and distrustful. He could not understand this wall of reserve.

One weazened grouch, Hank Burns, who had been a miner for forty years, tried to account for it. "Why should they trust you, Mr. Judson? They know you think they're dogs."

"But I don't!"

"Ain't you the owner's son? And a superintendent to boot. What should you have to do with such as us?"

Pelham gave way to a gust of pique. "That's a silly way to look at it."

Hank shook his head sagely. "Silly or not, Mr. Judson, how else can they look at it? You—or your paw—hires 'em, don't he? You can fire 'em too, if you don't like their talk. I hear some of 'em say, the other day, you was snoopin' 'round to spot union men. They know better than to talk."

The other shook his head, puzzled. "You talk to me."

"I ain't got no folks I've got to keep goin'. If I'm fired, I'm fired. 'Twon't be the first time. 'N' I don't shoot off my mouth any too much, either. Your job is to keep 'em workin', an' pay 'em what you got to. Their job is to get what they can. That's all there is to it."

"The good of the mines is their good."

The old man chuckled noiselessly. "I ain't never seen it, if it is. You want what you can get, they want what they can get. You can't both have it. . . ."

This was all Pelham could learn from him; it was as far as he could get.

Tom Hewin stayed on the job at all times. His son, Jim, every two or three months, broke loose for a half-drunk. He was too crafty to drink to the point where he lost control of himself; but he would become mean and quarrelsome. He made a habit of disappearing at these times for a couple of days.

"Jim sick again?" Pelham would ask, curious to piece out what he knew of the doings of these inferior folks.

Tom would lower at the absent son. "I used to whale his hide off for it, Mr. Judson. He's big enough to lick me now. He don't do no harm; an' I never seed him really intoxercated. He makes good money; he'll be a boss miner yet, even with this here foolin'. Booze an' women. . . . Every young man has to shoot off steam now an' then. They can't fool you, can they, now?" He leered in low camaraderie. "You been there yourself, eh? Don't tell me!"

Pelham was sure that he would not.

What with his work and reading, Pelham would have been content to remain a recluse on the mountain. Paul drove this out of his head at once. "Join the University Club as soon as you can; we'll make your salary two fifty a month, and you can afford the Country Club also. Circulate; it's good advertising. We'll keep the hill going somehow."

The first taste led to more; soon he was a regular part of the life at the clubs. Frequently he would knock off at four, while the other workers were still at their jobs,

to clean up and whizz over the hills for a sharp match of doubles, or an energetic foursome.

He could not manage a thrill of regret at the news that the sweetheart of a few summers back, Virginia Moore, was to be married in October. There was a new crop of debutantes, and most of the girls of his college days still put themselves out to attract him. For a few months he rushed Nellie Tolliver, a brilliant hand at auction; but he tired of her stiff preoccupation with the narrow limits of gossiping small talk.

One of his sister Nell's friends, Dorothy Meade, was more to his liking. She had come from some level of Washington social life, to marry Lyman Meade, the local representative of the Interstate Power Company. Lyman went his own easy way, and she hers. *Chic,* with an orderly aureole of fluffy gold hair, sparkling gray eyes and a perpetual display of more of her shoulders and breast than the lax club convention permitted, her only difficulty was in repelling admirers.

Saturdays were the regular dinner nights at the Country Club; Dorothy was the final fluffy attraction that turned Pelham into an invariable attender. He annexed himself to the lively group that ringed her on these occasions, to the amusement of her gayer admirers.

"Here's Dots, poaching on the bassinet preserve!" some professional bachelor, his head innocent alike of hair and illusions, would indict.

"First childhood or second, why should I discriminate?" Her cheerful offensive routed the covetous critics.

Dorothy's young moth was at least persistent. Her attractive bungalow dominated the hilly head of a by-street near the links, and Pelham formed the habit of dropping in for Sunday suppers. She was good to her

maids, preparing and serving herself the crisp salad mysteries and froth-crowned desserts.

"Can't I help some way?"

Her eyes would twinkle adorably. "Mamma's helpful boy! Here, let me put this apron on you!"

He could feel her voluble fingers whisper to him, as they shaped the knot; she would stand close before him, to see that the linen badge of utility hung evenly from his stretched shoulders. This disturbed the regularity of his heart-beats; but then, she was Lyman's wife, reflected Pelham. When the husband was present, he smiled enviously at the timid and satisfied adoration that Pelham's efforts to conceal published the more.

Despite all of his reading, Dorothy's marriage made her, in his brown adolescent eyes, wholly intangible. She could not have been guarded more effectually by the Chinese Wall, or a thicket of fire, with a paralyzed Siegfried moping without. Her liberal hints encountered an adamant obtuseness; he was not linguist enough, in her case, to read correctly frankly provocative pouts, slanted glances, even her gipsying fingers, that brushed his like the kiss of wind-wedded blossoms. These and more became substance of his erotic fancies; but the world of fantasy and of reality, in this case, he knew could never blend.

His amorous stupidity often exasperated her.

One night she yielded a narrow seat for him on the porch-swing, an openly demanded tête-à-tête, although the cushions on the stone steps and the settles within were warm with gossiping friends. "You're always so mournful when you're with me, Pelham."

"Oh, Mrs. Meade!" She tied his tongue when it came to repartee.

"Oh, Mr. Judson," she mimicked fretfully; then af-

firmed with decision, "you must meet Jane Lauderdale. She's about your tempo."

His eyes widened apprehensively; Dorothy's caprices were sometimes alarming. "Who's she?"

"The most serious little soul I know . . . and the dearest. You'll like her, when you meet her."

"When?"

"Planning to desert me already, sir! I'll have you for a month yet; she's away."

"I'm satisfied; it's your lead;" he dropped with some gracefulness into the parlance of auction bridge.

The time came when she took the lead. The crowd were noisy at the piano one night, when Dorothy turned to him, in the tiny butler's pantry, laying her piled platter on a shelf behind his head. Lifting her chin, she said provokingly, "Don't you want to kiss me, Pelham?"

The suggestion plunged him under a quick disquieting flood of emotion. One of his precious ideals citadeling womanhood crumbled with intuitive rapidity. A warm inner lash flushed his neck and cheeks. Beyond this betrayal, which was of short duration, he showed no sign of this delicious incarnation of his remotely fantasied passion, this focalizing on the solid earth of an ethereal hunger and its satisfaction.

His arms rounded her; he brought his lips down to her level; her own, moist and cool, opened within his. The ecstatic sensation closed his eyes.

She slapped him lightly on the cheek. "That's enough, now, you big boy!"

All that evening he kept his eyes on her, and managed a pilfered caress just before leaving.

Her eyes laughed at him. "Do you know, Pelham, I'm not sure I'll wish you on Jane, after all!"

He began to time his visits to the Meade house so that they found Lyman away. One cool dusk—Lyman was

in Philadelphia for the week—he veered carefully to something that was worrying him. "Nell—my sister—swears that the crowd are talking about us, Dorothy."

"Wants to wean you?" She laughed mellowly, the fluffy crown of curled gold dancing, as if sharing the mirth. "They've talked about Lyman for years, now; it hasn't slowed him. I like you far too much, boy dear, to give you up for idle tongues."

"I hate to have them mention *you*." He twitched restlessly. "You know what you're doing to me, Dorothy. I've been straight . . . so far. You're setting me on fire. This is a slippery hill to keep straight on; I might skid."

"Meaning?" She achieved two passable smoke rings—the effort after them was her chief motive in smoking—and idly planned a gown, tinted like the furnace-glowing sky, with twined gray smoke-wreaths in couples and trios—grouped figures that blent into one, then idly drifted apart.

"Kissing's only excuse is as a prelude to love's physical finale," he answered straightly. The dusk hid her wry face, as he continued, "Lyman's in the way. You say you still love him."

"Yes. . . ." She paraphrased, with a show of pondering, something she had read in a showy woman's magazine. "He can't help being what he is. None of us can change the material, though we may alter the pattern, or dye the goods. . . . Much good that would do."

"The lady turned philosopher!" His hand caressed her fluffy short sleeve caressingly. "So . . . you won't take me for a lover."

"Hardly," she laughed with sober hunger, grieving at youth's lack of subtlety.

"You're setting me on fire," he repeated with somber

relish. "You'll drive me to some other woman, or . . . women. You'll lose me either way; you wouldn't want me then; and I——this can't last always."

"I'll run the risk, boy."

The street quieted, as the late cars from the club droned away into the mist-damp distance. As Pelham turned on his lamps for the homeward run, he saw that the great summer triangle had swung from the east to the sunset horizon; Vega's white beauty, dragging near the western hills, was smudged by the unsleeping breath of those squat furnaces and coke ovens, whose pauseless task was to transmute the riven ore into iron sows and pigs—the first step in the alchemy that transformed the skeleton of the mountain into a restless trickle of gold, urging itself into the overfull vaults of his father. Paul slept now, as the son would soon sleep; but those furnaces, and their parched servitors eternally feeding the hungry mouths of fire, did not sleep. Some tortuous filament of thought brought him back to Dorothy, and the flaming furnace that she had helped light within him . . . which did not sleep. With all of the scorching rapture which her surface surrender yielded, he wondered if it would not have been better if he had not met her. . . . There were once three men in another fiery furnace; but they had walked out, unsinged. He knew himself well enough to be sure that he had no salamander blood; was he strong enough to tempt the break from the charring spell? Well, there was time to think of that again.

When he reached the highest crest, Vega still hung over the sullen glow of a furnace throat; but the smudge had grown darker.

The next morning his father, who seemed gifted with the ability to pierce unerringly to whatever weighed on the son's desires, went into the subject with him. "This

isn't criticism, Pelham; it's an attempt to help you steer clear of any mess. Particularly with a married woman. It sounds—nasty."

The son was indignant. "There's been nothing improper. I've taken a few Sunday suppers there——"

"Of course, of course." Pelham knew these dry tones. "It doesn't pay. I ought to have talked with you before. It's easy for a young man, particularly with good financial prospects, to get roped in by some woman, married or unmarried. . . . Sometimes he has to pay well to get out."

"That's ridiculous, about . . . about . . ."

"It doesn't pay, visiting one woman," Paul continued, in matter-of-fact tones. "Young Little almost had to marry one of the telephone operators at the Stevens Hotel. His father loosened up five thousand to get rid of her. I haven't any money to waste on your foolishness."

There was a silent interval.

"If you must have a woman—I passed through the stage myself, like all young men—don't you fool with the half-decent kind. You'd better go right down to Butler's Avenue, and pay your money down for what you get. There's less chance of diseases—they have medical inspection. And it avoids a serious mix-up."

Pelham's face went white. "I don't need that kind of advice. I've kept straight so far; I intend to keep so, until I'm married. Money couldn't pay me to go there."

The older man exhaled noisily. "Remember what I said."

A swelling white rage choked the boy's voice. "Does—does mother know that you went to—such places?"

Paul turned sharply. "Of course not. There are some things women are supposed to know nothing about."

That was the end of the discussion.

Pelham gradually decreased the frequency of his visits; but he still managed precious afternoons with her in his car, and occasional evenings, which left him irritatingly disturbed. He wanted to see more of her, and knew that he should see less; he was eager even to hear her name mentioned at home, but embarrassed if it was.

"Listen, Nell," he interposed to his sister, when he was helping to draw up the list of guests for a summer fête the girls planned. "You used to be pretty fond of Mrs. Meade."

"Not much! You can't have your Dorothy here."

Pelham was exasperated with the whole lot—always excepting his mother. His long confidences with her had begun when he was a child, and still were a pleasure and a panacea. One of these talks gave aid to his bewilderment about Dorothy, although she was not mentioned. It had started inconsequentially with a discussion of little Ned's conduct, and dipped into many topics. In the course of it, he promised to sound both the brothers on their attitude toward girls, and the annoying problem of sex.

"You can do much more with the boys than I, Pelham. They'll listen to an older brother, where they wouldn't listen to their mother."

Lovingly he patted the smooth flush of her cheek, delighting in the shy wildrose beauty of her face. His fingers crept from this to the straight chestnut folds of her hair, longing to stroke its unbound cascades, and let them curtain his face, as she had done when he was a little boy in bed; as she still sometimes did.

Then he answered her. "I listened to you, mother. It was your words and your wishes that have kept me straight."

"And, please God, they will always keep my own dear

son the finest, cleanest, purest man in the world."

Pelham was wholly under the spell of Mary's idealistic phrases, her sugary circumlocutions and romantic evasions of annoying facts. She had found it impossible to meet Paul's brutal logic with her ill-trained feminine inconsecutiveness; the course she took was an acceptance couched in some inoffensive generality or platitude, with a sentimentalized deity as authority for her stand. Paul pierced through the unmeaning glamor; but the children did not. When things went smashing, contrary to her plans and wishes, somehow God willed it . . . a convenient, kindly-disposed arranger, unless Paul's vigorous planning took precedence. Her thirty-nine connubial articles could be summed up in one: Paul could not be wrong, in the children's eyes; her wifely duty bound her to wholesale support, even of his errors or occasional unfairnesses. "He is your father, remember," blanketed everything. "God only knows how much I love you," was her unfruitful solace to them. And she did love them, and gave of her best for them, except where fealty to Paul, who came immovably first, intervened.

This prayer of hers for the son's purity continued to ward off the imperative temptations that nearness to Dorothy, or thoughts of Butler's Avenue, spread around him. It fell on his ears now with all of the old power.

He sat, rubbing her hand against his cheek, staring off to the distant vagueness that was Shadow Mountain. The dun clouds along the horizon had obscured its outline; the sky to the south was a sickly copper. Above it pulsed and banded a tumult of smoke gray clouds; the eastern horizon was a slate blue, rapidly darkening. A far rumble of muttered thunder was followed by the vivid glare of sheet lightning, which brought into sharp relief the serrated crest of the distant hills.

Suddenly out of the dull sky came a quick spatter of big drops. She slipped from her son's embrace, and went in to see to windows and doors.

He moved a lazy flanneled leg further from the edge of the porch, where the splashing drops bounced inward.

There was a short lull. He rose, as a white tongue of fire forked its way toward the near summit of Shadow Mountain, followed immediately by a deafening pattering rattle of thunder.

Hurrying in from the front porch, his mother met him, a strained look in her eyes. "There's a storm coming, Pell. Your father's on the way home. I hope it doesn't catch him."

Pelham moved idly into the library. Out of the side window he could see the approaching wall of misty rain, blotting out the familiar outlines of trees, the negro cottage beyond the spring depression, the spring buildings, the outhouses. How quiet, how unerring and irresistible its course!

The marching fusillade of drops touched the side of the barn, and darkened it ominously: from a soft gray it shaded swiftly to a rain-drenched black. Now it menaced the house itself; now the impartial advance of the shrapnel, in slanting crystal lines, brought the house beneath its unrelenting fire.

Pelham switched on the light, and pulled out an unread volume of Stevenson. His fingers loafed over the leaves, as he listened to the persistent drive of the storm.

IX

THE rain exhausted its ammunition during the night; a clear truce followed. The bright green cleanliness of leaves, the reburnished brilliance of golden-glow and flaming canna, showed the hill heartened by the hours of storm.

But there was nothing morning-minded in Pelham's soul, as he irked over the day's details at the mines. All that he had to do seemed mechanical, inconsequential; the planning had been done already—his admirable rôle was that of a cog, touching off other cogs to their diverse tasks in the vast mechanism that was disemboweling the mountain,—the mothering mountain, that had once been pal and parent to him. Less than a cog, indeed—for the other cogs held him as alien; he could not share their lives nor their thoughts, nor was he one of the final beneficiaries, no matter what the miners might think.

He knew, too, that his father was becoming as alien to him as these miners held that the son was to them. Pelham was wrapped up in the minutiæ of the mining; and this was a book in which Paul had covered only the first simple chapters. Again, the son's reading at the northern college, and the intangible outlook acquired there, opened vistas that Paul could not share; and in those matters where the two wills came into direct touch, such as marrying "where money was," and relationship with women, they were pole-distant apart. The son, in his youthful restlessness, was at outs with the whole situation; he was bored with it, as he was with the young concerns of his brothers, the chatter of Nell and

Sue, and the immeasurable vapidity of Nellie Tolliver, Lane Cullom, Dorothy Meade, the whole group of Adamsville's stale, unprofitable friends, young and old. There was, of course, his mother . . . and the mountain; but she was part and parcel of Paul's existence, too; and the mountain seemed strangely uncommunicative and passive, these days, as if waiting for him to make the break, to take an affirmative step needed to quicken his thinking and being.

The insipid promise of the afternoon's fête, for instance—were his days to be an unending vista of such chatter, and trivial preening and strutting of visionless girls and young men? Dorothy offered more than that; yet he was singularly at odds with himself over her. To be burnt by a fire he could not touch: to chain himself, a voluntary Tantalus, before perilous sweets just out of reach—an admirable rôle! It was in his own hands to end it; and since Paul's advice about Butler's Avenue did not condemn the thing that he shrank from in Dorothy's case, he was repelled by the remembrance that he had ever considered ending the purity that Mary had held him to.

After all, his sisters' fête would be better than that.

But when he had carefully dressed for it, and was immersed in its shallow flippancy, he reacted the other way. Lettuce sandwiches and lemonade!—Good God! Determined to dodge the rest of it, he sidled around to the garage, and sneaked out his car. When the fresh crest breeze sprayed over his face, he pressed on the accelerator, and only slowed with the turn into the road to the city.

At his arrival before the darkened Meade bungalow, two voices reached him from Dorothy's lit boudoir. His feet scraped slowly up the steps; after two thoughtful

feints, he pushed the bell. There was distaste already at what lay before him; life offered no new way out.

"Turn the porch switch, Pelham," Dorothy called from above. "Read the papers. . . . We'll be down soon."

So she even assumed his presence!

The swinging door was pushed outward, a short while after he had balanced himself on the extreme edge of the swinging couch. A girl stepped out and walked over to him. He rose conventionally.

"I'm Jane Lauderdale," she said, in a voice of pleasing, bell-like quality. "'Thea told me to amuse you, until she's ready. You are Mr. Judson?"

As their minds clashed in preliminary conversational skirmishing, some sense of her restful loveliness came to him. It was her eyes that spoke most clearly—those lighted windows in the spirit's comely house. Jane's eyes were a deep, swimming brown, with an effect of largeness and roundness, as if she looked upon the irregular march of the hours with the unfeigned naïveté of a child —a semblance heightened by a starlike radiance of the eyes themselves and the long shielding eyelashes. They seemed less to stand off and inspect him, than to reach out and envelop him, bringing him within their substance. Despite the difference of shape, they held the same deep liquidity of his mother's eyes.

The whole face, he fancied, was that of a mother—a madonna. The live brown hair was smoothed back from a high forehead, with the simplicity of a Grecian maiden; there was just a hint of pallor in her complexion, whose whisper of lack of health was negatived by glowing cheeks and sparkling face. It was not the typically thin-visaged Italian madonna; it was this sublimated into an ampler shapeliness of feature. The voice was clear and

direct, with the lingering overtones of a gong quietly tapped in still dusk. Her presence was restful, comforting, and at the same time embodied an unmistakable challenge to his own nature and worthiness.

The impression of childish naïveté, he soon found, must not be stretched too far; her vision was astonishingly clear and comprehending, with a definiteness that at times almost amounted to dogmatism.

Her mention of long-time friendship for "'Thea" gave something to inquire about. "You'll be at her table Saturday evening?"

"At the club, you mean? I hardly think so," and she smiled softly.

"Don't you dance?"

"Yes. . . . But not often. To be quite frank, the people one meets at the country club are rather banal . . . even Dorothy's friends."

"Thank you! That's a touch. Perhaps you bridge."

"Sometimes I make a fourth; but cards are very easy to get absorbed in, to the point of obsession, don't you think?"

"I suppose so; if you take them that seriously. Are you fond of golf, or tennis?"

A charming precision was in her answers, as if they had been framed before. "Tennis suits the strenuous adolescent; golf, the bay-windowed corporation head. One is behind me; the other I pray never to become. I don't love corporations," she smiled. The smile covered her preliminary judgment; his questions were banal, almost gauche; but what could one expect of a worshiper of Dorothy?

What did the girl like, anyhow? These were surefire topics with all the rest Pelham knew. . . . Perhaps the *Post*, on the table nesting her arm. "Are you enjoy-

ing the latest Chambers' story? I don't think it's up to 'The Danger Mark'—though, of course, Chambers'——"

"I enjoyed part of the opening—you know, the dry-goods inventory—the lingerie part. It's informative: a Sears-Roebuck for the Broadway shops. But—beyond that!"

"What are you interested in?" Inability to pigeonhole her among the feminine types he was used to called forth this poverty-stricken directness.

"I'm interested in what you are doing, Mr. Judson, ever since 'Thea mentioned it." Her straightforward eyes lit up for the first time.

"She's done nothing but sing your praises for the last few weeks." He rose in fatuous gracefulness to her opening.

The frank eyes measured him coolly. "What interested me was your work. You have charge of the mining at your father's place, haven't you?"

A bit dazed by the sudden shift, he told his connection with the management.

Her nod of satisfaction puzzled him. "I've always wanted to learn something of the other half of the story; I know the miners' side, from work with the United Charities. And I've been studying reports, until a sheer excess of wrath made me lay them aside."

What odd reading for a girl! "How did you happen to take that up?"

"Mrs. Anderson has me on her Labor Legislation Committee." She smiled gently, the eyelids nearing one another in unconscious grace. "I tried to interest 'Thea in it; one meeting tired her out."

He had a fleeting vision of volatile Nell or finicky Sue reading a mining report. Evidently this Miss Lauder-

dale was something of a person. Of course, it wasn't exactly a woman's work, unless her charm earned it as a unique prerogative.

A contented smile lengthened his lips. "We treat our miners pretty well, in this state."

"Yes, that is the general impression. I wonder if you've gone into the matter very thoroughly?" She was coolly critical; he felt a bit shriveled under her friendly gaze. "The South is backward, in some things; but it's waking up. You went to Harvard, didn't you?"

"Yale Sheff."

"Oh, that's better. I have a brother prepping at Laurenceville; he'll go to Sheff or Massachusetts Tech."

"Better, you say? Just how?"

"Yale at least talks about democracy." Her phrases were astonishingly direct, her intonations warm and enthusiastic.

"Did you go to college?" Pelham wondered.

She shrugged ever so slightly. "No; a finishing school —Ogontz. Don't mention it, please. Tell me something of your work."

Her leading questions were beginning to reveal his blundering vacuity about labor conditions on the mountain, when Dorothy fluffed out. Her sharp eyes noticed at once his sheepish interest. "Jane's been boring you with a discussion of the labor question, foreign and domestic, I'm sure! I can't convert her. She'll worm everything you know out of you in half an hour, I warn you."

Pelham agreed, a bit chagrined. "Yes. . . . She was just telling me what I didn't know about my men."

Jane's lips curved open into a smile, friendly and somehow approving. "You'll learn, I think."

Dorothy yawned in intimate boredom, "An apt pupil,

no doubt. . . . I thought this was the day of the great fête, Pelham."

"It is," he smiled. "They are at this moment enjoying lemonade and lettuce sandwiches."

Dorothy looked puzzled; Jane's cheeks crinkled appreciatively.

The older woman turned to the girl with ruffled rudeness. "Stay on for supper, Jeanne?"

The other shook her head. "I must run along. Choir practice to-night," with a mischievous dimple.

"Religious all of a sudden?"

"The rector flourishes in my spiritual presence."

"How is his new reverence?"

Her mouth twisted piquantly. "Mushy. . . . Nice boy, though. Coming by to-morrow?"

"Between three and four."

"So long. . . . Good night, Mr. Mine Superintendent."

Pelham convoyed her to the steps, doubly unwilling to let her go, as he reflected on her fresh charm, and the blind alley of the other woman's amorousness. "I enjoyed our talk, Miss Lauderdale. Could the course continue?"

"I'm always glad to have a human being to talk to. I'm staying with the Andersons; the number's in the phone book."

Thoughtfully he returned to the porch, and a cretonned wicker chair, ignoring the message of the partly-occupied couch.

Inquisitive gray eyes watched him. "Do you like her?"

"Oh, so-so. She seems intelligent."

"Men never do like Jeanne," she assured him, with a complacent rippling gesture of her flounced body. "She's a dear, but too dreadfully serious. Doesn't like dancing, and all——" waving vaguely in the direction of the club.

"Tell me something about her."

"There isn't much. Jeanne—I love the French twist, don't you?—Jeanne's a queer, dear girl, Pelham; always busy with labor committees, or something as uplifting and tiresome."

"I've never heard of her, except from you. Is she kin to the Andersons?"

"Oh, no; her people are northern. She was living with an aunt in Philadelphia; tired of her, and skipped out. Another of her modern notions. . . . She's intelligent; but, then, brains don't marry,—they go to Congress. Or is it the other way? Anyhow, Lyman says that I have no brains." She smiled provocatively.

This time he came, in answer to her pouting, unworded bidding. He was heartily glad, as apparently eager arms gave her the desired harborage, that the other girl was by now blocks away.

A day or two later he telephoned, and on Friday evening came by the Anderson house at eight.

"I'll be down in a minute," she called from the top of the balustrade.

The Andersons were away for the month, he recalled. With a pleasant restlessness, he prowled around the cosy living-room, and finally selected a library book on the table. It was by a favorite author; but the title, "A Modern Utopia," was new to him. He was into the second chapter when she appeared.

"What a remarkable Wells book!"

She smiled at the enthusiasm. "You don't mind walking, do you? . . . It's stuffy inside."

"No indeed. Just a moment." He jotted a memorandum of the volume on a handy envelope back.

For all the quiet grace of her face, he noticed that Jane fitted into his stride naturally—and he was a good walker. Instinctively they turned up the hill; the height beyond reached out an irresistible invitation.

Her face drew his eyes as inevitably as the mountain drew their feet. The face had sparkled on the Meade porch; but the brisk fingering of the night breeze woke it to a positive radiance. When she turned her eyes upon him, their radiant lashes enclosed darker heavens than those above, framing two stars brighter than Vega.

"Tell me about yourself," he urged. "Dorothy said you had 'run away' from your aunt——"

"Sounds like a naughty little girl, doesn't it? It wasn't quite that bad, though."

"Think of running away to Adamsville!"

"It is an 'H' of a place——" She looked quizzically at him; his smile reassured her. "I believe in that kind of hell. But it's nothing, compared to what I left." Her lips closed decidedly.

He would not drop the subject. "Your aunt was a doctor, wasn't she? And a politician?"

"So you are determined to slice to the skeleton. Yes, she's a doctor, runs her own hospital, and as much of the rest of the city as she can. She had the running habit, Mr. Judson; and, the first few years I was with her, she ran me too . . . and then ran me away." Unwilling lips locked, as if unhappy at the recollection.

"Just why?"

The words were picked carefully. "She wanted me to live as her echo—parrot her likes and dislikes, accept every limping bias as final truth. My mother was the same type." He fancied that the eyes shone more lustrously; but they were turned away. This topic, of the conflict between the girl and her parents, stirred him to a disquieting curiosity, avid for all the details, the hows and the whys; as if the answers held some clew that he sought for.

She answered the question that he refrained from asking. "Yes, she's alive; I left her, to go and live with

Auntie. The thing sounds unbelievable, and ridiculous; but she wanted to keep me forever at the age of thirteen and a half. Father was dead, and she looked young; a grown daughter was something to explain away. Why, she would have kept me in knee skirts if the neighbors hadn't talked. . . . When she married again, I left."

"Are those the only times you ran away?" he smiled the query.

She pointed to the red scowl in the north, where some startled furnace had opened its giant eye beneath the cloudy mirror of the heavens. "Isn't it marvelous! . . . Did I ever run away before? I believe when I was four I got tired of home—we were living in Indiana then—packed my rag doll and the puppy into my baby-carriage, and started out. . . . They caught me before I had gone a block."

He watched the vacant sky. The red glare had abruptly died. "You should see the view from our crest—Crenshaw Hill. . . . I almost ran away, once. I got as far as the railroad station." He detailed the weeks of punishment that had preceded his attempted escape.

"Your father must be a brute!" The contagious sympathy that shook her tones moved him.

"He's really nice. . . . His viewpoint is old-fashioned."

"Old fashioned! It's paleolithic. No wonder you ran away."

"He figured that I was his son—accent on the 'his.' He has the idea still."

She stared moodily at the dark blankness of the mountain, then swung beside him on a slender coping at the head of a little park lost in a bend of the highland boulevard.

"That's the trouble with the whole family system," she reflected slowly. "Parents never realize that children

grow up. Why not go to the other extreme, and assume that the child has an individuality from the start?"

"You like children?" Something in his thoughtful tone threw a shadow of embarrassment over both, intimate and strangely agreeable.

"Yes. . . . Very much."

The talk strayed gently to less personal matters. The moon-glow from a street lamp drizzing through gray-green leaves fell upon her shoulder; the smooth meeting, at the nape of her neck, between shining chestnut hair and glowing flesh caught and held his attention; he wanted to lean over and kiss it—harshly—as he would have kissed Dorothy. What would this girl do? What would she say? She did not dislike him, evidently; and he found her not only holding a deeper, more restful physical charm than the other woman, but also possessed of a mental kinship that he met for the first time in the other sex. Why, at times her impressions seemed even maturer than his own. How could his thoughts dare to link inch-deep Dorothy and this girl together! . . . But a kiss? No, he had done enough of casual loving; he would keep Jane's body inviolate even from the touch of his lips, until they were ready for the final mating. . . . Why not, if she would have him? What pitiful things, beside her, had been pert-tongued Virginia, Nellie Tolliver, and the rest! A madonna in face, a woman worthy of all life's adorations. . . . How astonishing was life, that had flung them together, when he might have missed this dearest hour that he had yet known!

Jane's thoughts, too, were busier than her words. He was attractive, she had at once decided, when measured beside the superficial trousered creatures, "positively not grasshoppers," that smirked their way through Adamsville society; but he was young, very young, in his ideas

—his brain still swimming in the haze of third-hand opinions which his father had inherited from slave-wealthy forbears. Men cherished easy mental ruts grooved by the unprogressive centuries; pioneering paths were only for the few. Pelham Judson looked hopeful; no more. Yet there was a distinguishing, cordial charm in his courtesy; it was not all lip-service. Poor kid! With a father like Paul Judson, and a mother swathed in old prejudices like a Memphian mummy in binding cerements—how could he be expected even to see beyond his fortuitous rut? The brief age of miracles had passed. But he was a nice boy; and with a different mother . . . . Perhaps she could do a little mothering herself; but she must be careful not to let him take her too seriously; or take her at all, she smiled to herself. She had boasted to Dorothy that her husband must be progressive, or pliable; Pelham seemed neither.

And yet he would not make such a bad appearance. Clean looking, athletic, and the son of a Judson—he would not have to be explained away or apologized for. It would be a positive charity to keep him out of the clutches of the usual Adamsville girl, her brain a fricassee of bridge scores and dancing dates. She smiled lazily as she reflected that he would take to mothering; his curly hair begged to be smoothed and tousled. Well, she would give it a yank or two; it would serve Dorothy right.

While their words skimmed jerkily above the subjects in which they were really interested, and their thoughts weighed, appraised, and at times depreciated, more deeply, an even more underlying, more ancient set of forces were at work. Eyes talk a language that thoughts would deny; certain proximities bind closer than the unthinking iron to the insensate magnet; above and below speech and meditation, unseen selves meet, measure, and

mate, dragging tardy consciousness into situations it thinks are of its planning. These calls and greetings date back of life's long blundering on the harsh land, back to the life-cradling sea: they speak with the unconscious weight of slow millenniums of mindless love. They are kin to the cord that binds the falling apple to the earth, the earth to the sun, the sun to the far starry outposts of the visible universe, and it to the invisible majesty beyond. The infinite pull of material attraction does not sleep: nor do these forces tire of their ancient tasks. Love, rooted deep in life, and born of older ties, does not cease its endless search, its tenacious intangible clasp of what it needs to round its unique need into a blent ecstasy.

There are those who deny romance to a love kin to gravitation and issue of insect matings. They are this far right, that romance is a late by-blow of the ageless creative hunger.

Pelham took Jane back conscientiously shortly after eleven. They had not mentioned the mining situation. The silent hours after their parting were full of the subtle working of those hidden forces whose power they had begun to feel, there upon the narrow coping above the little park.

X

THE next morning, Pelham put in a requisition at the library for the book he had commenced. Within the week he received it.

It was thrilling reading—setting at war, in each chapter, his keen mind, which approved at once of its unanswerable insight, and his emotions and prejudices, which balked and struggled against the shattering, one by one, of their ancient idols. It was slow reading: he would finish a chapter, the greater part of him ready to scoff at its conclusions, which must be based upon sophistries; and then, to detect the latent fallacies, he would go over it at once, and find that the rereading merely riveted the intellectual effect the first perusal had produced.

And yet his emotions did not lag far behind his mental acceptance. He saw again, and more clearly, that he had come to a parting of the paths in his thinking and being; the past months had inevitably brought him to this. What did other people think of these matters, if they knew of them at all? What would his father think? Again and again he told himself that Paul must accept these obvious, scintillating conclusions from undeniable premises; but a deeper voice, which yielded a sterner satisfaction, reminded that the economic upset—the socialism—expounded here was in direct opposition to all that his father incarnated. The chasm that had split him from Paul was no new thing; it bedded in childhood antipathies, in petty, intangible causes, in dislike at the elder's uneven rigor of discipline, in a deep-seated re-

sistance against being molded to fit the father's pattern, rather than according to his own leanings.

If his father would come with him, well and good; if not, the son at least would be intellectually honest, and right!

There was no doubt in his mind but that Mary, the essence of motherly understanding, would go with him in these new ways.

He finished the rereading with a sense of physical exhaustion, as if the inner conflicts had shaken his bodily balance. With this was a false sense that these must have always been his thoughts—the things that had seeded and sprouted just below his consciousness. How could he have overlooked them so long? The obvious explanation, that they had not been there, did not occur; and he would have denied it, if it had been called to his attention.

A night's tossing wakefulness induced a different mood. The spirit-tiring reading became unreal and inconclusive; he had strayed off after a marsh-light dancing over the morbid swamps of his emotional imagination. Further reading would purge this from his system.

The librarian obligingly pointed out the rest of the scanty shelf-end of socialist books. Ah, these would correct his wandering! There were Engel's "Origin of the Family," a treatise by Bax that he could not unravel, a rebound "Communist Manifesto," Blatchford's "Merrie England," the first volume of "Capital," in the Swan Sonnenschein edition. Eliminating the Bax book, he began to go conscientiously through the others; the task opened into a joyful journey. The persuasive structure that Wells had erected found buttresses and foundations. There was no longer room for carping or delay—he was convinced; more than that, he was stirred by an inner

storm, he heard an evangelical trumpeting such as must have overwhelmed Saul in the blinding reproach along the road to Damascus, he acknowledged a lashing command to spend himself for the splendid achievement of this immense dream, nay, this reality that was even now inevitably growing and strengthening throughout the whole man-sown planet.

He sent in an order for these books, and many others referred to. His mind was in a glorified glamor of dynamic thinking.

Was it possible that people could still be unaware of these vast truths? In college he had had two courses in classical economy; but the subjects had left his mind more bewildered than before. Now a vast searchlight cut apart the darkness; the hazy night was as definite as day.

He tried to simplify to himself what he had learned.

Wealth—all wealth—was the product of labor. That, and nothing else.

Rent, interest, profit—labor, human labor, produced them. It was not the land, or money, or factories; it was the toilers, sweating at their tasks, who made all of these, and who received for their toil a miserly fragment. Land, left idle, produced nothing; even natural products were worthless until man's fathering work gave them value. Money—gold calved no golden offspring, bills spawned no further bills as interest. Factories and machines produced nothing, until man's sweat and blood were poured out over them. Labor was the producer of everything; in justice, all should belong to labor.

War itself, modern, "civilized" war, was a poison exuded by world-greedy capitalism. The withheld product of labor could not be obtained by the needy toilers, nor consumed by the overfed masters; thus backward foreign markets were a necessity, to get rid of the pro-

duct the system confiscated and prohibited at home. Out of this grew clashing imperialisms, and wars . . . like this present one.

And here was a vast body of men—he reread Jack London's "Revolution" to get the marvelous figures again—throughout every country in the world, with a future planned upon unchangeable, irresistible economic laws, striving everywhere to bring about economic justice and permanent peace. And he had stayed out of it so long!

Slaves had gone, and serfs had gone, but the wage-slaves, the slaves of the machines, these remained. They must be their own Lincoln, and free themselves; their own Christ, redeeming their posterity. . . . Kings had gone; money kings must go.

He had called himself a Democrat: by God, he would be a real one!

Some intuition sent him again to "The Food of the Gods"; after rereading it, the inner excitement drove him out of restricting walls to the ampler stretches of the night. . . . This, then, the flash came, was the key to Wells' cryptic symbolism! The food of Hercules—the Heraklaphorbia—this was an intellectual food, an idea, that raised men to a height eight times higher than their fellows. He felt his own head in the clouds. He had tasted of the food; he felt a sense of bodily elation, as he pondered in the starry silence of the crest, high above the sleeping city—a sensation of physical magnificence, as if his body towered already above his father's, his mother's, the miners'.

The world of men was asleep, sodden, dead to the splendor of the truth that shone brilliantly throughout it. He felt kin to the stars, the night, the vast mountain that sustained him. The full force of the newspaper verse that he had clipped some days before, and carried

around with him, held his mind; he had grown into its mood. The lines obtruded themselves in fragmentary fashion:

Like calls to like; the high stars sing for me,
The harsh rude breezes speak to me alone;
I hear the voices of the hill and sea;
I talk with them, in language all our own.

Over the fields of heaven the stars are sown,
Vast shining ones, who fling their melody
To those whose ears can catch the brave clear tone.
Like calls to like; the high stars sing for me.

Stirred by the whirling stars, wild-tongued and free,
The winds out of the far-sky realms are blown,
Chanting their boisterous rebel litany;
The harsh rude breezes speak to me alone. . . .

And then toward the end,

Flesh of their flesh am I, bone of their bone,
Blood-brother to them all eternally.
All things are one with me, and we are grown
One in our speech, our sadness, our high glee. . . .

This was the boisterous rebel speech, this the message that they had been trying so long to tell him. This was the answer to his soul-hunger for an answer to life's unresting questionings.

Men, women, children—the iron city, the world—staggered blindly on, pulled here and there by vast laws which they did not guess. There was enough and to spare for all; there was plenty, plenty, only for the taking, for all of the children of men. There could be, if men would but have it, God's kingdom upon earth. . . . He felt a strange sense of reverence. Life was sweet to him, it had given him the answer to these things.

The following Friday—it was the fourth time he had seen Jane, and the third evening with her—he tacked the talk around to this theme that had so grown upon him in these brief iconoclastic days. The drowsy throb

of his motor left the mountain far behind; shot over the creaking wooden bridge that unbarred Shadow Creek, traversed the graveyard glimmer of the moon-mottled sandstone above Shadow Mountain, and now purred and loitered through a further farm-broken valley, nosing toward the East, where the stars rose.

"You know, Jane, I finished that Wells book . . . the one I saw first on your table."

"You liked it?" He could feel a smile in the quiet query.

A playful accusation answered her. "You didn't tell me to read it!"

"I knew you would find it for yourself."

He thought this over. "That was better. Tell me, Jane: are you a socialist?"

"Mm . . . yes, of course; all sensible people are."

"A member of the party?"

"I've never joined, though I've heard Kate O'Hare, and some of the local 'comrades' speak. And I went to the Debs meeting last fall."

So she was a socialist—one of the despised, reviled believers in the newer, finer creed! He had guessed it all along; the certainty as to it had played some part in the pleasure at his own mental choice. Out of a joyed heart he announced, "I'm going to join—at once! I met a member of the Adamsville local—a Mr. Duckworth——"

"I've met him,—an architect, isn't he? A dear old type!"

"That's the one. He has my application card."

"My dear boy! You're much too precipitate. You ought to read—and think—a lot first."

When she heard his achievements, she had to confess that what he had read already exceeded her desultory knowledge.

"But what will your father think of you!"

Pelham meditated, and spoke out of a divided mind. "He thinks pretty straight. And he likes Wells. I'm going to talk it over with him."

"Here's to a pleasant session! I envy you your courage, Pelham. What Auntie didn't say to me! Even Mrs. Anderson shrugs at my opinions. She's thoroughly bourgeois—charity, labor laws, factory reforms are as far as she dares contemplate." A little smile curved her cheek bewitchingly, as the brilliance of her large eyes caressed him approvingly. "Anything's bourgeois that we socialists don't like, you know."

She went on, after an intimate moment of pondering. "Let me tell you what we are trying to do, first. Mrs. Anderson's committee wants the state to pass a decent mining law. We're behind the rest of the country now in safeguards for miners; and our limping laws aren't observed. The Board of Trade has endorsed the new law, but the state labor federation has played off. Meet those men. . . . Most of the union bosses are crooks, you know."

"I know the other side says that——" His tone was incredulous.

"There are crooks in both camps, Pelham. Just watch John Pooley and his gang! And, while you talk to the redoubtable Paul J., see what he thinks about our mining bill."

"It's such a little thing, Jane, with socialism to fight for!"

She nodded her head, with a charming echoey dogmatism. "Big movements go forward by little things. . . . What's the time?"

The radium face of his watch made his own expression fall. "I'm afraid we must turn back, dear lady. . . . I'll sound my father, and let you know."

His mother, the next morning, casually began to cross-examine him concerning his sudden friendship for the girl. He had not seen Dorothy, he reflected with a start, for two weeks now; Jane had told him that the Meades were leaving for the summer, perhaps to be gone the next year as well. He hardly minded. Dorothy was a closed alley; she did not think,—and even if he had loved her, he could not have married her. But this girl . . .

"Jane's splendid, mother. I like her immensely."

"Mother knows her, Pelham. She is undeniably clever. She spoke at the State Federation of Women's Clubs in favor of our joining the National. Clever, but very . . . young. There are negro clubs in the National, you know. Don't you remember, dear, I told you how defeated the resolution?"

"I don't remember your mentioning her."

"She made the speech just after mine. She said, 'I am sure that Mrs. Judson, if she met her negro mammy in heaven, would be glad to see her.' And I answered, 'Yes; when I meet her, I expect to say, "Mammy Sarah, how are you? And how are all your folks?" I wouldn't say, "Well, Mrs. Sarah Barbour, what is your opinion of the present state of the drama, and the influence of Kant and Schelling upon American philosophy?"' It floored her. The resolution was defeated."

"I don't see anything so awful in it."

"But—negro clubs, Pelham!"

He waived the point. "She *is* clever."

Mary pursed her lips. "Her ideas seem . . . radical. That's bad enough, in a man; in a woman, it's inexcusable. It gets her talked about."

"People talk about Jane Addams, and Sara Bernhardt."

"There is a difference. I hope mother's boy won't

see too much of such a woman. . . . You haven't mentioned Nellie Tolliver in some time."

"Nellie's head doesn't hold anything except bridge and the club."

"Mrs. Tolliver is a member of the Highland Study Circle, with me, Pelham. Nellie is a dear, sweet girl. Any woman would be proud to have her for a daughter."

Pelham yawned brutally. "Hollis is coming along, mother. . . . I'm not bothering about marriage yet."

Conquering a bothersome timidity, he sounded his father upon the proposed law, and his recent reading. Paul saw through the timid questionings at once, and answered cautiously. "It won't do you any harm to read that stuff. We all pass through it. Twenty-five years ago, your mother and I read Bellamy's 'Looking Backward,' and liked it. Of course such things can't be taken too seriously."

At the mention of the mining law, the father snorted. "So that's what that Lauderdale girl has been up to! You'll find, Pelham, that Mrs. Anderson is something of a busybody. As that law is framed now, it would bankrupt every mine operator in the State within a year."

"But the principle of the thing——"

"The principle is admirable. But don't you bother about such generalities. You'd better get your mind down to the problems of the mountain; there's enough to be done here to keep your ingenuity exercised."

Jane's chummy note answered his scrawled report of the conversation. "And you might tell him that T. L. G. —'That Lauderdale Girl'—gives him her regards. He likes the principle, does he? I think we've got Governor Tennant on our side, although he's pretty close to your father's crowd. Once the law is passed, we'll make all the mine operators sit up straight! Until Friday night, then. . . ."

XI

WHILE Paul was dictating, in sharp, short sentences, the answers to the batch of mail marked "Mining," two cards were brought in to him.

"John Pooley,
President State Federation of Labor."

"R. E. L. Bivens,
Editor, *The Adamsville Voice of Labor.*"

His eyes crinkled into a smile, although the mouth remained a hard fixed line. Pelham must see this pair of blood-suckers at work; that would open the boy's eyes to the dry rot in the practical working out of his labor theorizing.

No, he would see them alone. Perhaps he could get at the son indirectly.

"Send Mr. Kane in."

The company's advertising manager opened the private door as the two labor leaders were adjusting themselves complacently into ample chairs.

"What can I do for you, Pooley?"

"We called to see about the convention special of the *Voice,* sir. Wouldn't you like a half-page write-up for the company, or yourself? The half is only seventy-five dollars. . . . It'll go where it'll do lots of good, sir."

Paul directed his gaze to the wheezing, balloon-like

figure of the editor. "Has Kane given you enough advertising, Bivens?"

The puffed, greedy face smiled ingratiatingly. "Mr. Kane's been very good to us, sir. At least a quarter of a page weekly."

"How has the *Voice of Labor* made out?"

"It's made out—that's about all, Mr. Judson. Print paper's gone so high, that only the adver*tise*ments has made it go. We expect this special will net a neat sum."

He jingled the Woodmen's emblem at the end of a thick gold chain, thoroughly satisfied with the world. There was an Odd Fellows' button on his coat—fraternal orders strengthened his appeals for the paper.

"Pooley, how do you stand on this mining law down at Jackson?"

The lanky president of the State Federation twisted his lame leg more comfortably under him, and leaned forward, gesticulating diplomatically. "It's both good and bad, Mr. Judson. Some of the boys is very strong for it. But I seen an editorial against it in the *Times-Dispatch* last week. I figured you might not be for it."

Paul cut through the verbal knot. "How will the Federation go?"

The other shook his head. "No telling. There's a few of them Socialists is delegates—they're for anything to stir up trouble; but nobody pays much attention to them. Then there is others. It'll be pretty even."

"How would you feel if I took the front and back pages, Bivens?"

"That would be fine for both of us, sir."

"Coming out editorially against that law?"

He wheezed deferentially. "It has some bad flaws, sir. I figured on a write-up against it."

"Make it strong, and I'll take the two pages."

Bivens consulted with the other representative of

labor. His eager eyes shone greedily. "How would you like us to put you down, Mr. Judson, for the main speech of the convention? 'Proper Legal Safeguards in Mining,' or something like that? . . . You know, the front and back pages is more expensive. Say five hundred for the two."

Paul watched their well-fed, ever-hungry faces with mental nausea. "All right."

"You'll make the speech?"

He nodded. "Don't forget the editorial."

As they rose, he lifted his check book with studied obviousness. "If those Socialists make trouble, find out what they want. If another advertisement will handle them——" He did not end the sentence.

He stared after their retreating figures. The spokesmen of labor! A herd of dumb, worthless brutes, led by pig-eyed greed! Promising material to have any say as to the destinies of a country! . . . Well, Pelham would learn.

Paul had a busy month of it. The mining was beginning to pay at last. Two hundred more convicts, more than a hundred negro workers, had been added to the force in the third ramp; its output had begun to exceed the other two.

After he had purchased the ore lands lying on both sides of the former holding, he called Sam Ross, Dudley Randolph, and the Birrell-Florence representatives into conference. Randolph was the only one who held out, when a pool was proposed to cover prices and wages.

"I don't have trouble with my men, Judson; I don't want any. I'm with you in theory, but I can't see any advantage to me in that proposition."

Paul then opened his alternate plan. The working out of the details took two weeks, but the result was the incorporation of the Birrell-Florence-Mountain Mining

Company. Paul Judson's salary as managing vice-president was fifty thousand, in addition to what the dividends would bring.

He figured up the value of his stock. Unless it depreciated, he could get out—now—with five million dollars! And this was only the mining rights. He could afford to let Pelham play with a few fool notions, when things broke this way!

On his next conference with the son over progress at the works, well-planned hints gave Pelham the opening to learn of the invitation from John Pooley, and the father's acceptance. "Of course, my opinions don't go as far as yours——"

"I didn't expect that. But this *is* great news! You'll come out for the new bill, after all?"

"With necessary practical modifications. I'm studying it out now."

Pelham repeated enthusiastically, "It's splendid news!"

At his first opportunity he phoned down to Jane an insistent plea for that afternoon. "You'll have to see me, lady dear; I've something important to tell you."

Was there ever a girl to whom these words, from even a passable lover, or, for that matter, a possible one, did not bring the fluttering fantasy of what woman has been so long taught to consider the one important something that she is to hear? This thought came first to Jane; then, smiling at her overstayed fraction of thinking, she promised the afternoon.

She was on the porch when his wheels slid to a standstill at the curb; he was beside her before she was well out of her chair. "The most amazing thing, Jane!" as urgent fingers levitated her into the seat beside him. "Dad's coming our way!"

Something of his flaring enthusiasm heightened her reply. "You can't be serious! I'd as soon expect Auntie

to be a convert!" Her mothering eyes searched his face anxiously. "You aren't teasing me?"

"Indeed not! He's to speak at the state labor convention himself, in favor of proper mining regulations. It's great, Jane! I wouldn't have believed it of him!"

Her mobile lips curved doubtfully. "For your sake, I hope you're right, Pelham. But—how can he? Why, boy, he's on the other side—he must be! How could he line up with our ideas, when it would take money out of his own pocket? Miracles don't happen, I'm afraid. I wish——" She sighed. There was something to admire, almost love, in his hearty zeal over the amazing convert; he was so boyish, so peltingly trustful!

"*I'm* for it, remember. And I'm his son." Her unsympathetic unbelief widened his gaze.

Her fingers brushed his arm in a fleet unspoken caress. "You're a good boy, Pelham. I haven't gotten over my wonder at you. But—you're pulling against him, in all of this, remember."

"He's decent." Real pain spoke here; his own doubts of the father gave an obstinate tinge to his reception of her objections.

A cynical sureness hardened the eyes for a moment. "Nobody's decent, when his pocket-book's affected." A merry laugh parted her lips. "How unfeeling you must find me! Let's pray I'm entirely wrong. Why not get a look at his speech, before he delivers it?" Incredulous, hope-against-hope eagerness flickered in her face.

This Pelham at once agreed to do. There was some ground for Jane's hesitancy, he reflected; most men, given Paul's position, would have been permanently intractable. But his father, after all, was different.

He could hardly let her go back for supper, although she had promised. A dizzying intemperance drove on his tongue. "I wish I could keep you, now that I have you

here," and his eyes dwelt upon her alluring shapeliness; her gaze was intently busied with the panorama of uninspired villas. "You don't know what knowing you has meant to me, Jane. I was in the dumps over the whole business. . . ."

"It's mutual, Pelham. The iron city has chiefly solid iron headpieces, I think. You were a rare find."

He chuckled. "You make the thing too intellectual, at that. I assure you that I wouldn't offer to elope with a suffrage tract, or a skirted treatise on socialism. My offer holds good, if you're willing." Playfully he increased the speed.

"Lauderdale isn't Barkis," she temporized. "Have you known me four weeks, or five?"

"So romance perishes, as the lady grows arithmetical! Love can't be weighed on the iceman's scales."

"Nor can mental dynamite blast it out, Mr. Miner. Modern marriage isn't a thing to venture lightly. Love's blindness was once thought a blessing——"

"It's often a mercy," he slipped in.

"To-day's surgery is curing the blindness. It's all right to mate as birds do, if people could part as easily. But when a heart must be pledged, not only to honeymoon days, but to the petty irks, and the tedious astronomical study of the skyhigh cost of living—— It needs reflection."

"You might give me a croûton of comfort. The especial heart I sit beside isn't pledged elsewhere, I hope?"

"Now, really——"

"That's not asking too much."

"It is," the lips pursed grimly. "It's pledged, alas, to the Uplift of the Underdog, the Castigation of the Capitalist Canine, the Manufacture of the Millennium, the Fashioning of the Future's Fascinating Feminism——"

"Enough, enough! But to no single heart," in pleading insistence.

"Nor to no married one neither," she laughed.

"Content, i' faith! Now you may go home to single blessedness and that supper you thoughtlessly promised to grace." But Pelham wondered, more than once, whether the girl's last light retort had hidden a dig at his friendship with Dorothy. Well, Jane had said less than he deserved, at that.

The convention came closer and closer; and still Paul had not had time to prepare the speech, when the son made his requests. The work at the third ramp, and the planning of an opening on the newly purchased crests beyond, kept Pelham's hands exceptionally busy, so that he did not find much time to wonder at his failure to see the expected address.

Three days before the convention, Jane met him with a worried face. "Something's rotten in the environs of the iron Copenhagen, Pelham. I learned about it from comrade Hernandez. One of the few socialist delegates, a Birrell-Florence miner named Jensen—I don't think you've met him—has been offered a direct bribe to oppose the mining bill. Somebody's busy, that's sure."

"That does sound discouraging. Let's go over your mining reports, so that I can get the facts straight. I ought to understand the situation, at least."

They went over the figures together. He began to visualize what the class struggle meant, here in the quiet, placid South. There had been four large mine explosions in the state the year before, the one at Flagg Mines killing a hundred and ninety-two—— "And all of it useless, Pelham! The simplest mine safeguards——"

"The owners can't know of them!"

She shut her lips. "They cost something. Every cent cuts down profits. It's cheaper to kill men."

"It's horrible!" In dejected impotence he clenched his hands. The unemotional rows of figures began to acquire a breathing significance. His vivid imagination pictured mangled forms, the bursting hell of explosions, the isolated horror of lonely accident and death, the pallid faces of starving mothers and babies, staining the broad margins of the cheap white paper.

She looked up from the pamphlets, her brows creased. Pelham smothered an impulse to kiss away the slight gravure of worry. "The West, bad as it is in some things, at least has modern laws and safeguards." An unmeant accusation drove in her tones. "The creaky old laws here are not even followed! When was the last inspection of your mines?"

"More than a month ago. The inspector wasn't very thorough, I noticed. They were pronounced safe."

"It ought to be done weekly, at least, beside a daily inspection by your forces. Gas can collect in the coal mines, flaws and cracks in the roofing anywhere—only close inspection will do. . . . And, then, think of the wages paid here! Can a man live—decently, I mean, so that he can send his children to school, and all, on what you pay? And Judge Florence gets seventy-five thousand salary—outside of his dividends."

"My father gets fifty."

"It's compulsory starvation and death for the ones who really produce the wealth. . . . We'll see what the convention does."

Pelham missed the opening sessions; but Jane gave him reports of the meetings she witnessed, supplemented by what Hernandez and Jensen told him. It was a heated gathering. Big John Pooley was accused outright of dishonest accounting, by one violent structural iron worker. The oily eloquence of Robert E. Lee Bivens smoothed this over. Each of the administration officials—"the boodle

gang," as the noisy radical minority called them—was flayed; the editor of the *Voice of Labor* received an especial lashing from Jensen, who charged him with deliberately selling out labor's paper to the corporations.

The machinery rolled smoothly. All protests were tombed in safely packed committees.

At last came the final night, with Paul's speech, and consideration of the mining bill afterward, as the only unfinished business.

Pooley, using his gavel vigorously, secured general quiet. He spoke of the honor paid by having as their distinguished visitor the wide-awake vice-president of the Birrell-Florence-Mountain Mining Company. "Every act in his life marks Paul Judson as a friend of labor. Many of you do not know that he holds a union card—the printers elected him to honorary membership more than a year ago. He is one of us. His problems are our problems. He is turning the splendid force of his intellect to a solution of the labor question which will help employer and employee alike. A gentleman of sterling integrity, a leader among leaders——" The fulsome eulogy continued for a quarter of an hour.

Jane, who sat beside Pelham, sniffed audibly at most of the speech. He had asked his mother to go with them; but she had been too busy planning a dance at the country club, which Paul was giving for Sue, to take the evening off. He would have Jane to look after, his mother reminded him.

The boy was irritated at his companion's attitude. The glamor of the situation, with his father as the recognized champion of labor, fitted smoothly into his own rebellious dreams. With this support, he could achieve his rosiest plannings.

Paul rose to speak, alert, dignified, commanding.

He paid tribute to the audience, and to the hosts of

labor they represented. They were particularly fortunate, he said, in their leadership; under the sane, conservative guidance of such men they were sure to reflect credit on the city, the state, the entire South.

"I believe in you. I believe in the work you are doing. You are the brawn and the backbone of our free white Anglo-Saxon democracy, the flower of the world's peoples. And the backbone"—he smiled embracingly—"is as necessary as the head; the brawn is as essential as the brain.

"There are some—socialists, anarchists, or whatever you choose to call them—who are working for a body without a head, brawn without a brain. You can find such bodies in the morgue. The decapitated socialist state is a corpse."

There was a burst of applause at this. Pelham went chill all over, as he realized how unpopular socialism would be made to appear. And—his father speaking!

"We have passed, as a people, out of the black gloom, our heritage from a red war of brother against brother, into the golden sunshine of a new day, a day of prosperity and plenty, an hour of progress and enlightenment. While the rest of the world is torn with war, peace is upon us; our products, sold to the warring world, assure an unprecedented prosperity to us. Beware lest the evil counselor, the plausible deceiver, the wily plotter creep in, and our ears lend attention to his seductive tones! This is no time for the disorganizer. We, as well as you, are fighting for the best things of life—peace, freedom, and the welfare of every one, capitalist and laborer alike, and a whole-souled, complete understanding and brotherhood between all of us!"

The applause was noisily demonstrative. One delegate, who had attended too many sub-conventions in various bars, started down the aisle to shake the hand of "brother

Judson." The vigorous pilotage of two ushers steered him into the safer harbor of the street.

After the interruption, Paul turned to his topic. "I favor state mining regulation—and the stricter the better, always conserving the full liberty of the individual to make his free contract. That present joke at Jackson—that so-called mining law, which would bankrupt every mine owner, and drive into unemployment and starvation every mine employee in the state—I know that none of you can be so blind to your own interest as to favor it.

"I hope that you will go on record as favoring a sane, reasonable law—one protecting your employer's profit, so that your wages will be safe."

He branched into a technical discussion of the flaws of the law, emphasizing what labor would lose in every case if the proposed changes were made. There were growls of dissent from some quarters—even Pelham, sick at heart, hissed one of his statements; but the applause overwhelmed the disagreement. Benignant John Pooley, seated at the speaker's right, led the handclapping at every pause.

"It's up to you," Paul's tones sharpened, grew crisper. "You have it in your power to go on record against it, or for it. If against it, you assure a continuation of the present helpful and hopeful laws—not perfect, by any means, but laws which will be constantly bettered by an intelligent legislature, representative of the whole people. Or you can favor it—and thereby favor, instead of prosperity and progress, bankruptcy for the owners, spiritual bankruptcy for its supporters, and, worse than all, a widespread business depression, which will force capital elsewhere, slow down and stop the wheels of industry, drive the storekeepers out of business, and drag your own wives and families into want, poverty, ultimate degradation and death.

"The smoke from those mining settlements and furnace stacks upon the mountain above our iron city is the symbol of life—life for all of us. It is the pillar of smoke by day, the cloud of fire by night. This bill"—and he pointed an imperative finger first at the chairman, and then over the audience—"this bill will clear the sky of that smoke, and leave those mines and furnaces to rot and rust into scrap-iron. Take your choice. I believe that you cannot fail to take the wise, the sane, the brotherly, the prosperous way, for all of us, for Adamsville and the nation."

Before he could settle into his chair, and while the applause thundered at its fullest, Jensen was on his feet, shouting a demand that the chair recognize him. Pooley blandly motioned him again and again into his seat. The applause persisted.

"A question, Mr. Chairman! A question, Mr. Chairman!"

The president could ignore him no longer. "Delegate Jensen."

"Will the speaker answer a question?"

Paul, suave and collected, smilingly consented.

"Isn't it a fact that"—Jensen's voice choked in his throat, in his mad eagerness to make his point—"that the mine safeguards here are behind every state in the union? That the men are paid less, and suffer more accidents? How can there be harmony between capital and labor? Don't we both want the same thing?" His words crowded over each other; his growing incoherence was unintelligible to most of the audience. He waved a pamphlet at the speaker. "I have in my hand the latest federal mining report——"

"Aw, hire a hall, Swedey!" an ugly-faced satellite of Pooley's cut in.

The audience laughed, releasing tense feelings.

"I will do my best to answer the questions," Paul began. He picked up a paper from the desk before him. "I have here the report referred to. It is a fact that the monetary wage here is slightly lower than in most states. But the purchasing price of money is almost twice that in some Western states."

There was some applause at this.

Paul went on. "As to safeguards, that bill takes away your chief safeguard—your job."

He sat down. The jubilant audience calloused their hands noisily.

The district delegate of the miners, Jack Bowden, rose gracefully. "Isn't it also a fact, Mr. Judson, that the Birrell-Florence mines have recently installed safety devices not required by the law?"

Paul did not know it, but he bowed agreeably. "So I have understood."

Pelham writhed. Even after his father's manifestly unfair speech, he had expected intellectual honesty from him. He had dodged both parts of Jensen's question. Surface brilliancy—but the questions were still unanswered. The intense disappointment in his father wracked him with physical pain.

As she felt Pelham's body commence to rise, Jane's hand clenched his arm. "Don't do it; it will only make a scene. Let's leave."

Ignoring the pleading grasp, he rose unsteadily. Against the walls of his chest his heart pounded irregularly; he feared for a flashed instant that it would burst its way out, and he would fall dead. Gripping the seat ahead more tightly, he found his voice. "Mr. Speaker——"

Paul looked at him, for the moment surprised and displeased. The cautious smile reappeared faintly.

"About this question of wages. Isn't it a fact that, the

smaller the dividends, the larger the wages? Both come from the same fund, the wealth produced; doesn't the prosperity of one cut against the prosperity of the other? So that, for labor to get its full product, profit must be abolished, and coöperation introduced?"

There was a gasp of surprise from the few in the audience who recognized the pale figure as the speaker's son. A scattering rattle of applause shook parts of the crowd.

Paul moistened his lips, and explained: "The questioner asks, will not labor's prosperity come when profit has been abolished, and coöperation substituted. There is something to be said for that as an air-spun theory. It has never worked in practice. We—all of us—must feed on our daily bread, not on economic theories," he finished with crisp decisiveness.

There was a generous hand at this.

Pelham's quiet words to Jane whistled between clenched teeth. "All untrue, all unfair. A thing cannot be good in theory and bad in practice. Something is wrong with a theory, if it does not take into account all facts, all reality. He can't even think honestly!"

She squeezed his hand in the darkness.

In dazed agony he sat—his father had left unperceived by the stage exit—while the delegates, their discussion carefully guided by the administration machine, voted, three to one, against the mining law on which he and Jane had built such hopeful fancies.

The summer stars hung muddily above the western horizon when he ran his car into the garage, and slipped quietly up to his room.

The rest of the Cottage was dark.

XII

PELHAM avoided his father the next week. The son came late to breakfasts, his father did not return for luncheon, and in the evenings Pelham dropped by one of the clubs for dinner.

He simply could not face the parent. They had passed, several times, on the place; they had spoken politely. But Pelham felt that this was only a courteous truce. Their ways of thinking were irreconcilable; what he regarded as his father's intellectual dishonesty, plus his own open opposition at the federation meeting, brought the conflict to a head at last.

His father was pledged, soul and brain, to things as they were. He was deaf to the call of progress, blind to what was imminent in the world around him, Pelham's emotionalized thinking told him. Paul was a Democrat, as grandfather Judson had been; he would remain one, even though he must see that the tariff issue was an outworn ruse, and that the states' rights question had been wiped out bloodily fifty years before. He was a capitalist; he would remain one, as long as a sleepily tolerant public opinion permitted this criminality in its midst.

Yes, criminality! Property was theft; Pelham was glad to find, in his new favorite, "Erewhon," an insistent echo of Proudhon's declaration. The lands, the waters, and their products shaped by labor's hands, must belong to labor, to the people; no whitewashing by legal titles could make the robbery justifiable. Capitalist industry, in which his father played a growing part, was symbolized by the employer's fingers, like a legitimatized sneak-

thief's, perpetually in the laborer's pocket-book. It was all the worse that accepted morality, law, even the church, pronounced it righteous. And his father was irretrievably part and parcel of it.

Pelham took it up with his mother, in one forlorn attempt to win her backing. She checked sharply his criticism of Paul. "He is your father, Pelham. He is older, knows more, than you. I cannot listen to you."

A sense of shame prevented the son's turning to Jane. He saw her once or twice; but she had been so right, he so wrong, about his father, that he could not feel at ease with her, until the sting of the disappointment wore off. Pelham was ashamed to go to her; he went, instead, to the clubs.

Dorothy was away; but he made out. On the night of Sue's dance, he delayed until almost midnight, in order to avoid his parents. He had worked late that afternoon, and had walked afterwards through the new portion of Hewintown that lay on both sides of the railroad track. The drabness, the noisome poverty, even in new shacks, depressed him immeasurably; his disgust at the utter inartistry had long been dulled.

As he paused at the bottom of the steps to the dancing floor, the shocking contrast unsteadied him. There, where the workers lived, all was bleak want; here, where the drones celebrated, all was plenteous riot.

The curving lines of dazzling gowns, where Lane Cullom led an elaborate figure—the shimmer of jewels, the gross powdered bosoms of the chaperones, the smug smartness of the men—what a pitiable travesty of pleasure! Festooned flowers, deferential service, barbaric, subtly lascivious music—this waste would have fed those workers for years! These were not brilliant nor creative people—merely average humanity, whom the spin of the

unfair wheel had swung to the top, to fling broadcast the stolen blood-toll of underpaid, underfed, underwise grubbers.

An overdressed, overperfumed matron brushed down the steps, and gushingly pushed her simpering daughter at him. An indecent exposure, as of a woman whose charms were on sale—his mind leapt to a miner's widow, holding by the hand her anemic, sunken-eyed daughter, who had stopped him and begged for work that afternoon —any work, to keep life in her daughter's body. And this waste!

Shaking off the depressed mood, he submerged his moralizing nature, and lashed himself into a hearty share in the pleasure-making. The unhealthy intoxication caught and held him; he danced and philandered with an abandon foreign to his nature. He felt that his part in the revel dirtied him. Once started, he hurled himself almost hysterically into the soiling gayety.

He had told Tom Hewin he might be late the next morning, despite the rush caused by wartime orders; it was after four when he went to bed. A troubled dream bridged his passage from sleep to waking.

He dreamt that he was flying—a common beginning of his dreams. He had powerful, sullen red wings, that beat against the gusty waves of wind, and swirled him up and forward out of the misty valley shadows toward the lean black peak of a solitary hill. Here a figure cowered —for a moment he fancied it was Jane. It turned frightened eyes up to his—no, it was his mother. He crept into her embrace.

All at once he was aware of an approaching darkness flying between him and the twinkling valley lights at an unbelievable depth below. The darkness took form as a vast black flyer mounting toward him. He unwound his

mother's arms from his neck. Dimly he knew that it was a time of war, and those twinkling lights were the eyes of vast munition factories, packed with explosives.

In a slanting drop he shot toward the black figure. He did not see the face; but he knew it for his father. Lower and lower he and the black figure circled, until the night activity below could almost be made out. He avoided two beating rushes of the black wings. He grappled with the enemy.

He felt his arms pressing outward the fierce talons that sought to grasp him, his hands straining against the pulsing throat. Back, back, back he pressed—then with a mighty effort released, and flung the other, wheeling like a thrown stick, straight into the factory of death below.

Desperately his wings beat upward. A wide-tongued flash of fire bit into the night, there was a crash as if the earth burst apart.

Still half asleep, he sat up in bed. The roar rang in his ears. The house shook; fragments of window pane tinkled on the floor.

Out of bed he jumped, avoiding the broken glass, still uncertain what was dream, what reality.

Somewhere outside he heard a negro's frightened scream, and the sound of running steps.

He pulled on a shirt and a pair of working trousers, and knotted his shoe-strings. As he ran down the hall, Hollis, his tones shaking, was speaking to the doctor on the wire.

On reaching the back porch, a peculiar smell struck his nostrils—just a suggestion of a heavy odor that he knew at once. The dead fumes of dynamite—could they be blasting that close to the house? An overcharge, perhaps?

Over the sink his mother bent, washing the blood from the arm of the cook, Diana. "What's the matter, mother?"

She turned an alarmed face to his. "The glass cut her arm—nothing serious. Hollis is phoning the doctor." As he came closer, she whispered, "Artery."

"Can I help?"

She looked white and worried. "You'd better go to the mine, Pelham. It's an explosion, I think."

"Which way?"

"Sounded very close—that first ramp, perhaps——"

He went for the car; it would be quicker, and it might be needed.

As he cut through the gap, on the road just under the summit in front, parallel to the old dummy line, he noticed that the gap workings, and the second ramp, were deserted. The road turned sharply to the north, circling the long squat storehouse. He slowed mechanically, as a quick side squint caught the group on the steps: McArdle, the clerk, his anemic face, under the sparse scrub of beard, flushed from his emotional exertion, hectoring the dozen frightened negroes in front of him.

"What's wrong, Mac?"

The white man cursed the panicky negroes, the explosion, his job which kept him tied to the building. . . . "I can't get 'em to go back, Mr. Judson, the——" He was off again.

"Leave the store, come on with me——" He snapped open the door of the car.

"Got to watch the phone. The hospitals are sending doctors——"

"It's that bad?"

Pelham turned on the power again, and turned up the front of the hill. The air was clear here of the sickly odor that had reached the house—the wind swept this slope clear of the reminder of what lay beyond. Just before the ramp buildings showed beyond the trees, it came to him again—the stabbing, strangling odor of exploded

dynamite. The tendency to nausea twisted his face into grotesque inhumanity; he held his breath as well as he could, and shoved on.

Now he had a view of the head of the ramp, and the shacks on both sides. His first impression was that it looked strangely usual: same houses, same isolated scrags of trees, all the familiar slopes and rises. A cloudy, half-hysterical belief fought within him that nothing had happened; surely exploding death and stifling horrors had not torn this kindly hill, these humble workers!

His vision cleared. The shacks were not the same; there was only a torn dilapidation on the farther side of the opening, only the vacuous shells of buildings stood on the nearer side. Horror visible, a wavering fog of dust and gray-smoky vapor, hovered over the top of the ramp. The huddling activity of the figures grouping and scattering above the opening, this was all unusual.

Running the car against a mound of red earth, he climbed clumsily out. His legs trod an unreal soil; it was as if he had forgotten how to articulate their use. The hurrying men descending the artificial slope did not notice him; they were intent on what was below.

On the third level he passed four figures lying parallel, motionless, dreadfully relaxed. He pressed his hands madly against his face, to clear the dust from his eyes, the punishing ache from his nostrils. He stopped, unable to proceed; dead men even this high up! One of the men shuddered, raised himself sideways. He saw that they were merely resting, recovering. The rescue work must be going on, then! He hurried lower.

Here was Tom Hewin, eyes bloodshot, a blackened bandage bulging out from his forehead. "You too?"

Hewin came closer, peering emptily into Pelham's face. He muttered something.

"What's 'at?"

"Hell." The manager held to his arm, as a rock to cling to, and, walking painfully, led him down the cluttered ramp, deeper into the dizzying mist. Every few feet he stopped to shout disjointed explanations or profanity into Pelham's ear. Grotesque shapes appeared suddenly, flowed both sides of them, were gone. Flickering lanterns bobbed horribly around the entrances; they stumbled over two prone figures, their wavering lantern lights sputtering out, like star-headed deities fallen and expiring. Wild bursts of imaginative activity rocked Pelham's perceptions; there was nothing real in the whole thing. The only living creatures were himself and this shrunken, dirtied being who shouted in his ear, descending ever into a darkening pit.

"It got them convicts. . . ." The story stopped, as they picked their way carefully around two uniformed internes desperately applying a pulmotor to a body flat on old sacking. There was another body behind, and four tall, tired negroes drooped on their feet, waiting to be sent again into the stifling danger. "Everybody in six . . . maybe eight. I counted eighteen." He took a moment off to scream commands at a foreman, who nodded humbly, and led his men back into the opened mountain intestine called entry six. "Eight is choked up with rocks. They wasn't many in eight. Niggers, maybe."

"They're digging in?"

"They got into six. Working on eight—the whole mountain's caved down."

"What did it?"

"Overcharge—damn' carelessness—God knows. At this time of all others—the damn' fools! I told them men that roofin' was cracked—an' then they overcharge! The damn'——"

"Shall I take eight?"

"I've got Gahey there. See the clerk at the bottom;

he's got the dope. Wire the State Mining Commission. We've notified the hospitals and the Red Cross. I've sent for the Birrell-Florence rescue corps; dunno what good it'll do. See Dockery; he's day clerk." Hewin shoved him on, and stumbled aside.

The air was clearer in the corrugated iron building at the bottom. The lights were lit, and their sallow glimmer equalled the dimness without. Pelham went at the job quickly—Dockery, cool and collected, spread the facts before him. He followed on the ramp map; Dockery explained lucidly. "In this workway there were thirteen men, Mr. Judson; ten negroes here; and here, and here . . . I figure about twenty-five killed, unless some are alive in eight."

The human magnitude of the thing focussed within him. He gripped himself tightly, and sent off a preliminary wire to the mining commission. It was after two when he got away from the office, to direct the temporary care of the bodies which had been carried to the storehouse in the nearer edge of Hewintown.

He saw Jane Lauderdale at the other end of the long drab room, busily directing the emergency workers the United Charities had sent. Deaf to the questions of the company doctor at his side, he stood for a long moment. Jane put her arms under the shoulders of a broken old negress—mother or wife—clinging to one still body on a blanket-covered packing case, and handed her tenderly to another of the girls. He caught one full glance at the woman's face, ravaged with a life's hard unhappiness, printed now with this vaster dumb suffering. The sharp clear brilliance of Southern sunshine drove in parallel golden bars from a western window. Outside, the gay blue of early summer, the beauty and joy; within, this man-made house of death.

Jane did not see him. He returned to the grim task of

providing for what new bodies were borne into the temporary morgue.

He could not find time to think; here was all that he could do.

XIII

THE morning's mail included one letter of importance for Pelham. It was a form announcement of a directors' meeting of the mining company, at ten.

Judge Florence was calling the group to order, when Pelham arrived. The young mining engineer took one comprehensive look around the massive directors' table, a plate-glass-covered stretch centering the sumptuous gray office. Slowly he let himself into the one vacant chair. Paul Judson sat next to the head; Henry Tuttle, of Tuttle and Mabry, general counsel for the corporation, was talking earnestly to him. Kane, one of Judson's directors, was grouped with two of the younger men from the other interest. Sam Ross, John and Stephen Birrell, Randolph, Pelham nodded to each in turn: their faces seemed to him carved into a new heartless savagery,—a huddled group of soul-squeezing masters of men.

As general manager, Paul reported briefly the facts of the accident, with evidence, gathered by company detectives, that the blow-up originated in a miner's criminal carelessness in seriously overcharging in number six entry. This was due to wilful misunderstanding of the company's haste to get out iron, to take advantage of war prices; haste, but not carelessness, was demanded.

Two of the fourteen in the entry most affected were still alive; one had given his deposition at the hospital, telling of the conversation between the miner and his foreman immediately preceding the explosion, in which the dead miner had boasted of the overheavy charge.

"There are, according to the latest reports," Paul con-

cluded, "twenty-two dead, and about thirty injured in greater or less degree. Spence and Jacks have filed already the first damage suits. If we pay these claims, it will cost the company from a quarter of a million to a million dollars. Since the company is not at all responsible, I recommend that we make no settlement whatever." His thin lips lifted together, and contracted. He sat down.

"Can you give us the legal side, Henry?" Jeremiah Florence had lifted Henry Tuttle from Choctaw Falls to Adamsville, and started him on the driving career that made him the worst-feared corporation lawyer in this part of the South. He regarded him now with fatherly admiration.

Tuttle rose lankly, his thin watery eyes staring with fixed impassivity. His voice was soft and malleable; he was never hurried, never vehement; he possessed a tact that caught the idea of the more creative type, then carried it to unerring completion. "Paul's suggestion would hold, if we decided to follow it. There is no liability in this state for such an accident; it would be a different matter if the legislature had passed that additional liability act last fall. That is the legal side."

He took his feet more slowly in answer to the chairman's second question. "Public policy? That is perhaps different. It might be well to make some sort of settlement. It 's never hard to buy off Spence and Jacks; three or four hundred apiece—a thousand at the most—they'd keep half, or more——"

John Birrell, the older of the two boys, who retained much of the implacable push that had carried old Stephen Birrell to the headship of the local mining industry, spoke sharply from his seat. "I agree with Mr. Judson. This is no time to yield; ore's high enough to pay for any unpleasantness. Give them an inch, they'll demand

the whole plant. They were restless before, in our mines as well as the Judson; even the furnaces report union talk. This is the chance to step on the whole matter."

Three or four expressions of similar vigor were too much for Pelham. He took the floor unsteadily; the glances bent on him were curious, almost pitying. The table's circle had read of the pass with his father at the labor convention; there was an uneasy titillating expectancy as to how much of a fool he would make of himself, how long he could hang on to the fringes of business, while he nourished a sprouting radicalism.

"I represent only two shares as a stockholder," he began painstakingly. "I am only one director. But I wonder if you gentlemen know what you are doing. Thirty of your workers lie seriously injured; twenty-two families are deprived of their bread-winners through an accident not their fault, but yours; yours, and other mining employers' who have fought all safety legislation, even as late as last week——" His eye caught a side glimpse of his father's unperturbed profile, as he rolled an unlighted cigar around the rim of his teeth. "It is not enough to say that these were convicts, or negroes; many were hired white workers. I don't know how well you have the law sewed up; but every idea of justice entitles them to full settlement. Any other decision would be an outrage."

The aged chairman, while disavowing any sympathy with the spirit of the young man's remarks, wondered if a proper regard for public opinion would not dictate some middle course. The younger Birrell sided with him, as did Sam Ross, Tuttle, and several others. At length Paul Judson was asked again for his opinion.

"Gentlemen, you understood what I said before. I have told you what you must do—refuse to pay one cent

to any claimant, no matter how strongly the claim is pressed. Any other course, in the long run, will be suicide. Unless you want ultimate bankruptcy, you will treat this as a business matter." He gathered into a portfolio the papers before him. "I have some matters to attend to. I have shown you how to handle the matter. You can call me in for a vote."

The discussion veered and twisted after his abrupt departure; but Pelham could not fail to see, even through his disgust, how his father's insistent advice, no matter how unpleasantly phrased, dominated the group. The driver of men is never popular; and Paul Judson's keen, aggressive mind drove them against their wills. Within an hour a resolution embodying his idea was put and carried with only the son's dissenting vote.

The *Times-Dispatch* contained a report of the meeting, and an interview with Paul Judson stressing the legal side of the situation. An editorial referred to the disaster as one of the necessary casualties of industrial growth, paid tribute to the company's promise of further safety devices, and hung on an attack on the "forces of unrest that sought to make capital of the accident, to aid their insidious unAmerican propaganda."

Pelham was puzzled by this wording, until he came across Jane, who had charge of the relief work among the victims' families. Her large eyes sparkled with a light of warfare, as she fell into step beside him, among the poor-ridden shanties of Hewintown. "You hadn't heard? Why, it's all over town now, Pell. There's a big meeting at Arlington Hall at seven-thirty to-night, to discuss the accident—and a strike!"

"Fine! It had to come—the radical unionists were just waiting the chance."

"Will you take me?"

"You couldn't keep us away."

They arrived early, but the crowd had come earlier. Only by taking stage seats were they able to get in at all. When the son of the owner of the mine was recognized, there was slight hissing, and scattered handclapping from a few Socialists. Jensen came over quietly to Pelham, his eyes dancing. "Your application's gone through, my boy; Hernandez has your red card in his pocket."

They shook hands silently. Now, Pelham realized, he was a recognized member of the red-bannered army, who were leading man into his promised earthly heritage.

Michael Serrano, who presided, plunged into the thing that had brought them there. "I'm a bricklayer by trade, as you all know. The bricklayers have made me president of their local four times. I'm called the 'reddest of the red.' If this murderous mine accident doesn't make all of you reds too, then you aren't fit for anything but to be murdered!"

The crowd stamped approval. They had come in fighting spirit; the proper key had been hit from the start.

"Now, if ever, is your chance to win your rights. The papers have been slobbering of wartime profits on ore; the reckless haste to line their pockets was the real cause of this explosion for which the worthy directors of your mines are responsible. They can't afford a shutdown now; this is your hour to win!"

Turning from the applause, he introduced Ben Spence as "a labor lawyer, with a union card in place of a heart." Spence and Jacks were the regular federation attorneys, and Spence was quite close to Pooley and Bivens; but he always professed a near-socialism that captivated his hearers in Labor Day addresses. He passed from a humorous opening into an indictment of

the mining corporations that brought the hot crowd clamoring to their feet, with wild shouts of "Go to it, Ben! Eat 'em up!"

The next few speeches scattered. Pelham wondered if the mass desire would evaporate without action. Serrano saw the drift, and walked over to where the son of Paul Judson sat drinking in the wild-mouthed denunciation of his father's rapacity and cold-heartedness. "I'm going to call on you, comrade."

"You have to?"

The chairman nodded. "You give 'em hell. I'll sound 'em out first. These regular unionists—pfui!" He spat in scorn, and went back to his splintered gavel.

Jack Bowden, of the Miners', tied up with the Big Pooley gang, finished his inconclusive remarks. At once Serrano's orotund Italian voice shot out into the crowd. "Now you've heard what you're getting. And you've heard what you're entitled to. How many miners are in this crowd? Raise your hands."

Amid general neck-stretching, the hands went up—almost a third of the vociferous audience. There was a rattle of applause at the good showing.

"Are you going to stand being treated as dirt, or will you act like men? How many of you miners vote strike? Let's hear your voices!"

The shout of approval showed how avid they were for some direct expression of their accumulated resentment. Bowden, a worried look on his face, rose to protest; the ecstatic chairman waved him down.

"I'm going to do an unusual thing. I'm going to call on one of your employers to tell what he really thinks about you. I call on Comrade Pelham Judson, assistant manager of the Birrell-Florence-Mountain Mining Company."

There was no applause. Pelham, tremendously alone,

walked down to the front of the big platform. His mind registered random impressions—the faded tawdriness of the cheap bunting below the dirty footlights, the smell of fetid cigars and pipes, bulging necks above dirty unstarched collars, the fierce resentment and shining hunger for better things flaring in the eyes just below him. The irresistible contrast with the suave gray fittings of the directors' room flooded him.

He summoned all his knowledge of speaking, and stood silent, his eyes ranging the vast pit and the jammed galleries.

"Fellow laborers—comrades——" His voice choked. "Many of you know how I think about this. What happened two days ago on that red mountain I love was murder—definite, systematized murder. The danger has always been known; and when every effort to wipe out that danger by law has been fought, and the deaths occur, I call that deliberate murder!"

There was a startled pelt of applause in one corner of the room. It did not spread; the others were too interested, too surprised, to pass judgment.

"What ought you to do? Your referendum will decide. If I were in your places, there is only one thing I could do—and that is, strike! Strike against the company, and me—yes! Strike for the enforcement of the weak-kneed mining law, and for a better one! Strike for more pay, shorter hours, and your organization! Fight back! Unite"—his long, tense arms reached out, and drew in together in a clenching grasp—"bring together your force as one man, and there is no power in the world that can stand against you!"

This was familiar. They howled agreement.

"There are two ways you must strike. Part of the blame lies with that legislature at Jackson. You elected them; you can retire 'em. Strike politically. Unite at

the polls—there'll be a labor ticket, the socialist ticket, for every office—drive it home to victory! Then you will have laws which would make such an explosion an impossibility!"

There were a few mock groans from the *Voice of Labor* crowd, but the majority still sat silent.

"You have a quicker weapon, on the industrial field—a strike. We've all read the announcement of the company's action; my vote was the only one against it at the directors' meeting. You must strike to teach your masters what they can't do! Strike for justice to the thirty men maimed and crippled in the cause of profits! Strike for the twenty-three families who are the worst sufferers from this hell. Yes, twenty-three, Mr. Chairman; I received phone word that Hank Burns died of his injuries at six-thirty to-night." There was a faintly rising moan of anger at this. "If you unite, as I believe you will, there is no power in the world that can stop you!"

He went back to his seat, trembling, his forehead moist with frigid sweat. Jane's rapturous hands caught his; he felt fully repaid.

The meeting broke up in an uproar of enthusiasm.

As he started for the Andersons' with Jane, the mad spell of a June moon-bright night caught and tortured him, until it was pain to think of letting her go. The cool darkness rushed by on both sides. Out of the crevasses of big buildings they passed into the more open stretches of low urban homes. The country club road invited; they slid over gentle rises until they had their fill of tree rustle and moon shimmer. Against the sky they traced the soft outlines of the swan and the lyre swung to the East over the dull rose glow of unsleeping furnaces; but the persistent flood from the moon dulled even Vega to a mild glimmer. At length the car whirred

up the last hill, and stopped in front of the darkened house where she was to sleep.

There was so much to be said. The beauty of the night was throat-catching, and lifted them away from the hectic scene at Arlington Hall, and the bitter fight that to-morrow must bring. He felt her full sympathy with the attitude he must take; her first hand-grasp, as he took his seat after the speech, told him that. His hand, as the car waited before her house, lingered fearfully against hers; an electric current snapped between the two.

His fancy played fitfully with fantasies that started with his lifting that warm dear hand to his kiss . . . then the yielding lips . . . then the mutual surrender. But like a scourge memory listed over to him the mouths he had kissed, youthfully, poignantly, casually. . . . No, he had done with that. This must be no mere union of bodies; love should begin with a pure communion of kindred spirits. A kiss, a caress—these were the soft persuasive preludes to the swelling finale of mating; cheapen them, wear out their springbud freshness, and the blossom of mated love must remain stunted, like a frost-warped dogwood flower,—must henceforth be soiled, like a draggled pear-blossom mired by an April downpour. Hereafter he would hold his lips—and keep hers—inviolate, virginal; the miraculous event of love consummated should not be fouled by recollections of squandered embraces, of cheap philanderings.

The desire to touch and conquer the hand beside his almost overpowered him, despite his ascetic musing. Spasmodically he pulled his hand away. A force stronger than his will brought it slowly back, until it shivered against hers.

Quietly, with restrained and schooled abandon, his

words breathed out. "Jane . . . dear . . . dearer—dearest——"

Her intuitive eyes read the words that were coming, before his own mind framed them. A sudden blossoming of joy surged within her, so great for a moment that it prevented speech; then, panic-stricken, she wished to postpone the inevitable question, to delay the rapture, to flee away, with the words unspoken, for just a little longer to consider the matter. . . . She said nothing of this; her silence, blent into the silence of the mountain at the end of the rise before them, was voluble with another message than delay or hesitation.

An agony of doubt racked him. Hadn't he been mistaken all along? Wouldn't she laugh at him, for his presumption in reading even toleration in her eyes, that radiated indifferently upon things unworthy, like himself, and worthy alike? Would he dare go on? He must—even if her laugh shattered the iridescent sphere of his hopes.

An impassioned eagerness to get the words out made his tone forced and unnatural. "Will you have me, Jane? Will you love me—a little? I know I've no right to speak—my affairs are so tangled, and all——"

Then she raised her arm, until the hand was above his head; and her fingers touched his hair gently, caressingly, soothingly.

"Jane. . . ." His voice was rich with reverent unbelief.

"Pelham dear——"

In excess of happiness, he caught the hand beside him almost to his lips; and then, instead, pressed it against his breast, against his heart.

His laugh was almost incoherent. "I was so afraid you'd say 'no.'"

The light shone only on her averted cheek. "I was so afraid . . . you wouldn't ask me!"

"Silly girl! When every infinitesimal part of me aches and cries out to you! I can't believe yet that you've said yes."

"Yes," in joyous affection.

"And I will aim a lifetime toward making you glad you've said it!"

"I'll always be glad, no matter what comes."

"I've got to let you go now—it must be almost three. . . . And I'm not going to kiss you, even now, dearest—dearest—dearest! I'll say it all night to myself; I'll never use another word——"

"Well, hardly ever," she amended prettily.

"When we can be married, then you'll let me kiss you. And don't put me off too long!"

He fingered the wheel thoughtfully; why let her out at all? No, he must help protect her now.

"Good night, Jane . . . dearest mine."

"Good-night . . . my man."

His car sliced the friendly night that lay heavy on the hill road. He whirled up the great half circle to the crest far to the east of the cottage, and muffled the engine at the highest point. To his left, too far away to be distinguished except as an irregular blackness against the softer gray of the valley behind, lay the black peak of Crenshaw Hill, the fatal shattered entries beyond it, the mourning shacks of Hewintown near it. There was no light in them. Behind was the blur of Shadow Valley, and the endless diminishing rollers of hills sloping slowly to the salt gulf monotonous miles away. Before him lay Adamsville, almost asleep; the symmetrical criss-cross of lights, like a vast checker-board blending into the far distance, caught his imagination. His heart sang aloud with his own happiness—an emotion so overcoming, that

he forced himself to think of lesser topics, to regain mental balance before returning to the rapture of Jane again. . . .

The iron city, an iron checker-board of lights. . . . The will-less men moved here and there by great hands hidden in the opposing darknesses—by capital's sleek and pudgy paw, by labor's grimed and toil-stained fingers: behind these, moved by the greater mastery of the forces of nature; by the mountain, and the iron grip it embodied; by the touch of the golden god that was to-day its master. A futile game, for the poor pawns . . . where one in a thousand became king; and kingship brought no joy, but only division and unrest. The blasted, furnace-punished ore was material for the painful alchemy that made it gold: more than this, the miners themselves, the stooped laborers, the slatternly starved wives, the thin children, the corpses lifted from the ruptured bowels of the hill, to a final scattering in some cheap pine house of decay—all these were part of the horrid modern alchemy that made them gold for his father's sake. That he had ever been a part of it! Well, with Jane his, he was through with the old horrors. . . .

Jane . . . with an effort he brought his mind again to the scene before him. The sleeping homes of the iron city, black in the darkness before him! Each of those tiny houses held situations, problems, as complex as that storm that must soon break over the cottage beyond the mining section. They were all asleep, gathering strength for fresh outbreaks of hatred and love.

What if they never woke? What if the sleep became a merciful finality, sponging out the aimless unrest men called life? Who could say which would be better?

For him, his problems simplified, glorified now by what Jane had said to-night, life, with all its zest and joyous restlessness, was infinitely preferable.

He must go on; he must make the complete break with his father, and soon. It was a perilous thing, this going alone; but he knew that he was able to do it, just as he had once roamed alone the hidden reaches of the mountain.

He stood out from his car, to be nearer to the mountain. It was an instinctive action he could not have explained. The soft strength of the soil rose through him; he felt refreshed. It was not only battlefield, but the cause of the struggle; it was the prize to be won by the angry puppets its iron strings pulled here and there. There was no other course he could follow; he felt a calm certainty that the mountain, the great dark mother with its bleeding iron heart of red, understood this, and was wholly in accord with it. The mountain understood it—and a dearer, nearer heart, his from henceforth.

He slept at length peacefully.

Paul Judson pushed the next morning's paper over to Mary without words, his stiff forefinger indicating the part he wished her to read. It was an account of the previous night's meeting, featuring a florid write-up of Pelham's emotional outburst.

She finished it without comment.

Her husband looked at her evenly. "There has never been any insanity in either side of the family, or I would think Pelham came by this naturally."

"He isn't a fool, Paul."

"Where does he think this will end? It's bad enough when we are united against the perpetual unrest of the ignorant mob. But to have my son turn against all that his ancestors fought for!"

Mary watched him thoughtfully. "You two cannot pull together, Paul. Why not help him get somewhere else?"

"You mean——"

"You mentioned that Governor Tennant wanted to do you a favor, and suggested Pell as mining inspector, or something. Wouldn't that straighten out this situation?"

Paul looked at her doubtfully. "One of us has to make the break. Of course, he'll make trouble wherever he is. But he is my son. A thing like that might make him behave."

Finishing his coffee, he pushed his chair back raspingly over the hardwood floor. Over in the boys' wing he called Ned. "Will you tell Pelham I would like to speak to him?"

Father and eldest son walked quietly out over the untouched portion of the outcrop before the house. "You don't want me to discuss with you the unusual line of activity you have taken up, Pelham. . . ."

"It is only fair to tell you, father, that I have joined the socialist party."

"You don't intend to remain with the mining company."

Pelham gulped. This was what it must mean.

"I can get Bob Tennant to appoint you a State Mining Inspector. You can live on the salary."

"There is no work I would rather do. . . . Of course, I can not change my ideas."

"We'll regard it as settled. I'll wire him this morning."

Two days later, Pelham received the notification of the appointment, just before Spence, the labor lawyer, had him on the phone. The young mine-operator at once shared his information.

"That's splendid, Judson! I've got news too—the referendum was eight to one for strike—and the national's wired that John Dawson's on the way! Big John Dawson—now for some fireworks!"

This was progress, with a vengeance! Pelham was free at last of the company; the revolution—at least in Adamsville—was heartily on its way. With Jane's spirit backing him, and always beside him, he felt that this hectic week had justified itself. Now for the triumphant clash!

XIV

JOHN DAWSON, organizer of the National Federation of Miners, picked his way through the raw grayness of the Union Depot, in the muscle-cramped crowd that came in on the day coaches of the 5:10, until he reached the station itself. His eyes picked out the hesitant clot of four men off to one side. "You the committee?"

Serrano introduced them briefly: Jack Bowden, state agent of the miners; Ben Wilson and John McGue, of the strike committee. Dawson clenched each hand in a vast paw, then beckoned them away from his two grips. "Wait a minute." His alert eyes sieved the crowd. "See them two boys in gray hats? They've followed me all the way from Wilmington. Hope they've had a nice trip; I do love detectives. . . ." He motioned them away. "Naw, I carry my own." Adjusting the two big valises carefully, he smiled, "Let's move."

They went out through the truck entrance, and across the gusty avenue, clanging with cars filled with early workers. Depot idlers stared at the group; the tall heavy-loaded man in the center would hold attention anywhere.

Serrano stopped half a block away, at a flamboyant entrance displaying "Mecca Hotel" in dirty white letters above. The clerk, a limp young man without a collar, shoved over the tobacco-stained page. Dawson signed it, forming each letter painstakingly. They walked up one flight to the room.

Dawson looked around critically.

"Biggest room they have. They'll put in the other two beds to-day."

"Some of the boys may have to spend the night here. I'm glad it's near the station, if any quick getaway has to be made." The organizer smiled, his lips curling back over big front teeth; there was something disquieting and unsmiling in the look.

Serrano got rid of the rest of the committee, and went into an elaborate detail of the situation.

Dawson was able to help him out. "You'll find I know the land pretty well. I worked three years in the West Adamsville mines; they ran me out in the strike of '04. Who can you count on?"

He listened attentively, checking certain names in a thick yellow notebook.

"I know this Jack Bowden kind. We find 'em all over. In West Virginia we amputated a bunch like that. We've got 'em in Chicago, Indianapolis, New York. . . . Give 'em a few days, and they'll show yellow; then it's easy to fire 'em. Bowden looked fishy. These labor tin Jesuses make me sick! Better than anybody else, and sold out in advance. Who's this Judson?"

The energetic bricklayer told of the recent convert, and the Arlington Hall meeting.

"He can talk? We'll use him. But you can't trust them fellows too far. I'm not a socialist, you know; don't believe in voting worth a damn. Never got nowhere, never will get nowhere. But in a strike, they help."

They went over the morning paper. "Mmm—only a few hundred out—— What's the straight goods?"

"Over five hundred from the Judson mines, six fifty from the Birrell-Florence, and about four hundred others from the mines on either side. We haven't

touched West Adamsville yet, or Irondale. If only the furnaces could be called out. . . ."

"Won't come. We can try; but mine strikes don't get 'em. No organization. These men all joined?"

"Joined or joining."

"This says scabs from Pittsburgh. . . . No law to stop 'em?"

"Ben Spence, our lawyer, says there isn't. In the last street-car strike we tried the law; the courts wouldn't enforce it."

"How do the boys feel?"

"They want to fight like hell. They'll stop the scabs."

"Got to be careful there. That sort of thing is dynamite; it blows both ways. Company won't hear the committee?"

"Young Judson's father's the reason. Says he won't allow a union man in his shop hereafter. No committees, nor nothing."

"Let's see the place."

They walked from the end of the car line. The roads through the property had been made city streets, when Hillcrest Addition was thrown open to the public, and the party could not be stopped. Dawson paused to shake hands with the groups of pickets on the various cross roads. He had a personal word for each, and a concentrated way of getting the details he needed out of the incoherent members of the working body.

Joined by Ben Wilson and several of the pickets, they passed into the company estate, and by the entrances to the gap drifts and the second ramp. Only a few negroes were at work in the gap; it was not until the second big slope that the white workers appeared. Dawson looked a question at stocky Wilson, hardly up to his vest pocket.

"Convicts. Almost three hundred of them."

"Any niggers go out?"

"Half a dozen. You met one, Ed Cole, picketing by Thirtieth Street."

A red-faced Irishman walked out of a knot of workers and greeted the tall organizer. "Hello, Dawson. Remember me?"

"Your mug's familiar. Lemme see—your name's Hewin, ain't it?"

The superintendent grinned. "You ought to remember it. You beat hell out of me in the Coalstock strike for staying on as foreman."

"Scab then, eh, and still at it." Dawson's tolerance had a touch promising danger.

"That's what you'd call it. I'm in charge here. Mind your own business, or I'm not the one who'll get beat up this time." He turned with grinning ugliness and climbed back to the opening.

They cut over to the railroad track, and entered Hewintown by the back way. Dawson studied the land carefully. "That's the way they'd bring the train from Pittsburgh, of course. And that's a pretty narrow cut beyond that dinky little house. Who lives there?"

"Mr. Judson, the vice-president."

"This ain't no place for a mine-owner."

Dawson's comment on the shack town was a string of profanity. "Even in West Virginia they had better dumps than those! I wouldn't let my pig live there. Company houses, as always."

"Yes."

"This crew out?"

"All but two or three. The convict stockade is on the next hill; the niggers live in Adamsville, or in Lilydale, over yonder." His pudgy fingers pointed through the trees to the south.

They passed company detectives and guards, in clusters of two or three, at every corner. "These always here?"

"Most of them new."

"We'll help 'em earn their money. . . . Take me by number three, and the hospital you mentioned. I want to see it all."

They were not allowed to go down this ramp; guards with shotguns refused to allow any ingress. "You might get blowed up too, buddy."

Serrano left them, to pass around the word of the meeting that night. Dawson listened to the vivid hatred of the company all the way down the hill. A vigorous nod punctuated his opinion. "That's what they are; a bunch of lousy murderers. It's no worse here than other places; you've got to fight for what you get, anywhere. Pretty bunch of uglies here already! And when they try to run in Pittsburgh scabs——" He did not finish.

The momentum of the strike grew day by day. Most of the papers continued unfriendly; but the *Register,* which made a point of claiming to stand for the man in the shop as well as the man in the office, insisted that public sentiment was with the strikers, especially because of the recent memory of the accident horror.

The packed meetings in Arlington Hall were reported favorably in this paper; and they were emotional successes. John Dawson was not a graceful speaker; but his harsh bellow meant business, and his imperative magnetism shone through the awkwardest gesturings. Bowden contributed suave appeals, and Big John Pooley, the state president, took the floor the second night to remind that organized labor stood behind their efforts. "I am sure," he boasted, "that you will win, and even

sooner than you expect. You have the companies practically beaten now."

Serrano turned to Dawson, puzzled. "What's he getting at, with that stuff?"

The enormous organizer looked at him searchingly. "If you watch a snake hole, you're liable to see the snake crawl out sooner or later."

During the rest of Pooley's speech, the huge organizer, head sprawled back against the wall, chin upraised, studied the speaker with a hungry intentness, as if investigating for that weak spot he had found every man to possess. The bricklayer chairman phrased and rephrased to himself his introduction for the next speaker, one of the negro miners. It was always risky, this opening the union doors to the black workers. Of course, as a socialist Serrano always urged it, arguing that labor's only safety lay in having this convenient surplus labor force within its own ranks, as protection against black scabbing; but there was some division in the local about it, and the southern unionist took slowly to the idea; occasional revivals of racial intolerance, based upon dislike of sharing work with the darker cousin, split unions and federations, delaying solidified strength for years and decades.

Pooley ended with lame vehemence; and the voice of the Italian chairman thundered another plea for labor's unity, introducing a black man to show that no boundaries of nation or race counted in the centuries' long battle. "I'm going to call on Will Cole to speak to you. Will is a black man, who was in Number Eight entry when the dynamite murder took place. His dead comrades talk to you through his living lips. Come on, Will, tell us why you don't look for a pay check this week."

They laughed at the rude jesting at the invariable boomerang effect of their sole weapon of protest—a

laugh that quieted to respect, as the grimy overalled negro was urged up the side steps and to the center of the stage. His eyes blinked at the dazzle of the lighting until the whites showed; his shoulders hunched deprecatingly. He could not speak to them as man to man, that he knew; the difference in color was ever in his mind, and in his audience's.

"Ah'm only a nigger," he began diffidently. "You-all white folks don't want niggers in yo' unions, you-all don't want us to wu'k whar you do. Some er you don't lak us havin' our own union. An' niggers is crazy too; Ah kaint make dat wu'thless gang in number two come out, nohow.

"But Ah come out. You-all know Jim Cole was in Number Six when de mine oxploded; you-all know he's dead now. Ah live on dat mountain, same as Mister Judson. Dere ain't no more reason why me 'n' mah brudder should a got killed in dem mines dan why he should a. Ah done jined dis union, an' Ah'll die befo' Ah'll scab. An' any scab dat comes mah way had better have his ears all aroun' his haid!"

They chuckled at the conclusion, but it made its effect. "When you all unite, white and black, you can snap your fingers at all the Paul Judsons in the world!" Serrano never lost a chance to drive home a point.

Next afternoon's headlines promised the arrival of a trainload of workers during the night. This lent an added air of uncertainty to the meeting following. Dawson's pleas to the men to hold fast, to convert the scabs with arguments, not bricks, were as strong as ever; but despite the ample audience, even he was a little upset by the fact that the whole Bowden-Pooley crowd were absent from their stage seats.

When he got around to Machinists' Hall later in the same evening, for the conference over the next day's

activities, he found the state labor organization present in full force. The ornate double rows of mahogany-stained chairs, arranged in a hollow diamond shape, to accommodate the fraternities that met in the hall, with raised seats at the four points of the diamond for the officers, were half filled with the Pooley followers. Dawson called the meeting to order.

Jack Bowden rose, spit carefully into the shiny brass cuspidor, placed there to preserve the long-haired red carpet, and began. "Men, the strike is won! We've been in consultation with Mr. Judson and Mr. Kane, and the whole thing is to be called off to-morrow morning! They agree to consider every one of our demands, provided only we don't insist on the demand for unionization. We can't win, with this trainload of detectives and workers from up north; I think we're lucky to beat 'em this way." He turned to Dawson. "You've done mighty fine work, John Dawson; and the state treasury of the mining union will be glad to foot your bill comin' here and goin' back."

Dawson was out of the chair, his throat palpitating, almost too choked to get out a word. "I've been waiting for you and your kind to show your hands, Bowden. I'm glad you've done it this soon. Did Mr. Judson say he would grant all demands, except unionization?"

Pooley shifted his lame leg, and spoke up. "Mr. Kane it was we talked to to-night."

Dawson's clear-thrown tones fired the next question at him. "Did Mr. Kane promise to grant every demand, except only unionization?"

"He said they'd consider 'em. It's the best——"

"It's nothing, and you know it! Fire me and the real union men who are making the trouble, and turn the whole thing over to you yellow-livered double-dealers—a fine way to run a strike! With us gone, and the

strike broken, *then* your Mr. Kane, who isn't even a boss, would agree to *consider* the demands. Are you damned fools, or plain ordinary crooks?"

He paused for a moment. Bowden started to reply, but was checked by fear of injury, as Dawson took one tremendous step toward him. Pelham Judson, seated to the right, caught his eye. "If that there Judson's son had spilled this soft-soap, I could get it; you might expect it from he and his class." Pelham winced at the scorn. "But you—a union card dirtied in your pocket, you, a Judas to your kind—you got no place in a room with decent men."

Pooley tried to bolster up Bowden's pallid protest, blustering, "You look here, Dawson. The State Federation of Labor——"

"Damn the State Federation of Labor! If any organization, labor or otherwise, stands in the way of our beatin' a fight, we'll smash it! We're going to win, do you get me? You keep out. As for you, Bowden——" He came close to the local agent, bending down from his towering six feet and a half to bring his face near the other's. "You better get out, before I have the national office down on your neck. This is final: from now on, you stay out. We'll run the strike without any talk from you. Go back and tell your Mr. Kane that there's a bunch here he can't double cross, or buy out! Now git!"

Three times the suave agent started to speak. His fingers wandered uncertainly up and down the shiny buttons of his fancy vest, his eyes glanced away from the brutal dominance in the huge face before him. At last he turned to Pooley. "Goin', John?"

Pooley noted the cringe, and his nostrils lifted slightly. He spoke definitely. "There's no hard feelin' about this, Dawson? You understand that——"

"Yes, I understand." The sudden burst of anger had gone; there was a vast patience in every syllable. "I understand; you needn't explain." He turned dispassionately to the others. "Now, boys, what's the reports for to-day?"

The work was finally done; they started out. At the door they were stopped by half a dozen newspaper men, who had been held up by the doorman until the conference was over. "Anything special for to-morrow, Mr. Dawson?"

The big miner grinned amicably. "You might say everything's coming our way. With twenty two hundred men out, and five of the mines stopped, things are lookin' up."

The reporter for the *Advertiser* pushed out a question. "Did you advise violence in stopping these workers from the North?"

"Good God, no, man! That's the very thing I'm fighting against. You heard me—in every speech. We're law abiding. If there's any lawbreaking to be done, let the companies do it." He smiled grimly. "They're itching for us to give 'em an excuse to bring on the militia, as they did in '04, when they massacred the miners. They'll fail; we'll fight within the law."

He scribbled vigorously. "Is it true you were driven out of Montana and West Virginia, and almost lynched in Michigan?"

Dawson's neck swelled, his eyes smouldered. "Yes, it's true, every bit of it. And I was driven out of this state in '04. I expect it in my business. You might say things is changing, and it may be Mr. Paul Judson who's driven out next time."

There was a chorus of appreciation from the committee.

"I guess that's all."

One reporter—it was Charley Brant, of the *Register*—called Pelham aside. "Gotten any word from the mountain recently . . . to-night?"

"No; why?"

"That trainload of workers is arriving; there's trouble, rioting or something."

"Are you sure?" Excitement blazed in his face. "Tell John Dawson so."

He called him over at once.

"We got a phone message from a man on the ground. It's on the mineral line, halfway between Mr. Judson's house and the viaduct, if you know where that is. Our man said it was serious."

"I'm going." Dawson sliced his words off briskly.

"Use my car; it's quicker," snapped Pelham.

Jensen, McGue, Dawson, and the reporter got inside; two others of the committee hung to the running boards.

Pelham drove at top speed out the Thirty-Eighth Street road, and circled around the crest. "I know the place," he explained. "We'd better come up from behind, if anything's doing. They might stop us."

He turned from the county road to a cool country lane cutting through tall long-leaf pine, in the middle of Shadow Valley. The car's lights danced unreally on the crowding trunks ahead, the wheels slipped and skidded over the sprinkling of carpeting needles. He whisked to the right, and took the hill toward the mountain. They had heard no noise as yet.

Up a gravelly hogback to a level a hundred feet from the tracks,—and they were in the midst of it. The uncertain rumble from men massed blackly in front of and all around the stalled engine's headlight, broke over them; they saw the train, somber and illy lit, stopped midway of the deep cut through the next chert hill—an ideal place for an ambuscade.

They heard single voices, broken by the spurty wind. Then the men in front of the car dissolved, into the blackness on both sides of the track. Now they could see the piled mound of huge stones, cross ties, tree trunks, which had stopped the engine. Close below the headlight was a moving shadow they finally made out as company men, they could not tell how many. The red gleam of the headlight on dull metal shone on the far side. Before the mound of rocks and stumps two men still stood.

"Get off that track," the words came clearer now, from one of the men just below the headlight. "Or we shoot."

It happened so quickly that they hardly had time to get out of the car. A voice came from one of the two upon the track, the pleasant, velvety richness of a negro voice. "Ah reckon Ah kin walk on dis track ef Ah wants to."

"You black——"

He did not finish. From the deeper shadow below the tender, two rifles popped together, with a thin hollow noise, like playthings. There was a shrieking medley from all sides. For one instant, etched black against the light thrown by the unwinking eye of the engine, the two figures stood. One of the negroes plunged wildly to the side, clattering and tumbling down the seventy foot fill to the bottom of the sharp declivity. The other stood alone, a black break on the lighted area. He screamed once like a kicked dog. He slid to the ground. His body huddled across a rail.

"God!" Dawson exploded. Tumbling out of the car, they started pelting toward the track.

They stopped, still thirty feet from the lighted area, as half a dozen men plunged toward them, scattering to

the safety of the woods. One came at them—Ben Wilson, who should have been with the committee.

"For God's sake, don't go there—they're shooting to kill——"

Dawson caught him by the collar, shook him bitterly. "What hell of a mess is this! We've got to stop it——"

Wilson made a gesture of hopeless exultation, touched with something sublime. "You can't stop it now!"

Dawson stared at him in amazement.

The cries became louder, from all around the motionless train; they looked back. Protected by the guns under the headlights, a line of hesitating men were cursed forward to where the obstacle lay crudely across the tracks. The leader of the guards, rifle cached on his left forearm, pointed this way and that.

The reluctant line of workers burrowed into the mound. Boulders of ore, a broken wagon, old crossties were pulled out and sent bounding into the seventy-foot gulley, each starting a rocketing train of pebbles and rocks after it. The front row of gunmen had moved silently forward, and menaced the threatening darkness.

Suddenly there was a shock of breaking glass, and a herd scream from the front car just behind the tender. A cloudburst of stones rained against the length of the train from the gap's crests on both sides. Windows were caved in, rocks bounced noisily off the roof, there were gulped outcries from the penned men inside the cars. At a command, the rifles flared wildly toward the tops of the cut.

Wilson pulled out a pistol, dropped to his knees, aimed carefully at the leader of the gunmen, standing awkwardly in the exposing glare.

Dawson jerked the pistol from his hand, and sent the man tottering sideways. "Not that way."

The track was cleared now. Even the first negro's body was laid hurriedly on the south-bound rail. But the wild bombardment of the train had had its effect. The bewildered engineer started backing into the gap, in whose deeper shadows the reinforced strikers had further advantage.

One boulder, two-thirds the height of a man, was sent lumbering down, gathering momentum. It leapt against the side of a car; for a moment the car tottered. The head gunman, seeing his men deserted by the train, stumbled down the cross-ties toward it.

"Hey, stop! Damn you, stop, I say!"

His voice cracked; he began again.

It was a rout for the company forces, a clear victory for the strikers.

Then with a whirr like giant mechanical wings the belated guard automobiles, four of them, swung around the curving crest of the road fifty feet behind and above the cut. The trees and underbrush had been cleared for just this purpose. The huge searchlights, one to each car, wavered, then poured their blinding flood on the dark gap summits.

"Oh, God! The deppities——"

The light itself seemed to stagger those who had been triumphant in the dark. They diverged sharply from the point of advantage. Those on the far side cleared back toward the east. Those on the near side halted uncertainly for a fatal second, before they ran toward the two ends of the cut.

"Let 'em have it!"

An intermittent sheet of flame broke from the guard automobiles. The defenseless workers stopped and tumbled grotesquely. To Dawson's horrified imagination it seemed that more than a dozen lay flat and twitching in the hellish flare of the searchlights.

"Come on!"

"Got 'im, Jim!"

"Take that, you damned——"

With savage yells the new attackers, firing whenever they saw a moving target, covered the slope, and halted above the train.

"Hey, there," bellowed the man in the lead, addressing the train crew below. "Whatcher stop for?"

"We're going on."

"Why 'n' cher go on, then?" he parroted in irritation.

The whistle wailed, the engine and cars shuddered forward toward Hewintown. The first attack was over.

"Well," Dawson led the way back to the low gray car hidden in the shadows. "Hell's loose this time!"

III

THE COLES

XV

THE youth who lay dead on the track was Babe Cole, the youngest of Tom Cole's four sons.

Three years before Paul Judson left Jackson, in answer to that wordless message of the mountain that he interpreted as promising all success to him, Tom Cole had received a call to Shiloh African Baptist Church, the tall white church at the corner of Pine and Gammon streets, at one end of Atlanta's sprawling negro section. He had not succeeded in making farming in Fulton County pay.

"Nigguh caint make money grow nohow," he would complain to neighbors who had come to the crossroads church to hear his sermon, and stayed for the inevitable discussion of crops and stock and any other topic wandering minds might bring up. "Ah kin make cawn grow, an' peas grow, an' string-beans grow, wid de good Lawd's blessin'; Ah kin make pigs grow, an' chickens grow——"

"You eats 'em anyhow, Brudder Cole; ain't sayin' whar you gits 'em," chuckled Peter Bibb, the oldest elder.

The pastor joined in the laugh against himself. "Sounds lak you'se tryin' to establish an allerbi, Uncle Peter. Mebbe you ain't never heard dat our hens, de Plymouth Rocks Aunt Stella tends herse'f, is de fattes' in fo'teen miles." He grinned easily, bringing out the mesh of bronzed wrinkles beneath the knotty kinks of wire-black hair, powdered with uneven gray around the edges. "But Ah gotter go, breddren. Caint make no money here nohow; Ah's done preached de gospel six years now in dis chu'ch, an Ah reckons Ah done 'zausted mah message."

The urban congregation was proud of "Brudder Tom" from the start. "Ah wuz bawn in slavery," was his favorite beginning, "in bodily slavery; de good Lawd done riz me to freedom. Ah wuz bawn in slavery, in spir'chual slavery; de good Lawd done riz me to freedom. De Lawd sont me to bring grace erboundin' an' everlastin' to you sinnuhs; come unto de fol', oh brudders, let de Lawd's bap*tiz*in' wash you free f'um sin an' de ol' Debble's tracks on yo' soul——" They rose to his eloquent appeal; his open air "bap*tiz*in's" up Peachtree Creek were scenes of pervasive religious ecstasy.

Preaching was pleasant, but not profitable. Tom gradually secured a number of customers who called him in for day work, keeping lawns in order, hedge-clipping, and some regular gardening. The house he got at two dollars a week, from a white land-owner interested in the church; and there was a succession of invitations to dinner from the members of his congregation, whether well-to-do or not; "feeding the minister" was an acknowledged duty of all good African Baptists. But there were Stella Cole and the five hungry little Coles to be considered; these were not included in the invitation.

Stella finally, through the aid of her sister Caroline, maid to a family on Washington Street, got work as cook in one of the big houses on Pryor Avenue. It was much the most "hifalutin'" section of the city, she assured Tom, and Judge Land certainly looked the most important jurist in all Atlanta, when he walked stiffly down the front steps, beneath the lofty ante-bellum pillars, and let "Miss' Kate" deftly badge him with a lilac spray, before opening the low-swung gate and passing into the changing world without.

Stella figured that the two dollars a week, added to the panful of cornpone and scraps of left-over meat and des-

sert, which she was expected to take home every evening, raised the family to a position of positive prosperity.

One afternoon Tom Cole sat lounging upon a bed in his back room, talking over with a committee the "chitterling supper" to raise organ money—an entertainment in which the church members gave the food, then bought it back, the money going to the church. He was rounding up an easy third year at Shiloh Church, and looked forward to many more.

The front door snapped open with a peculiar sharpness. The committeemen sat up, surprised and puzzled. Stella's voice came to them, high-strung, weeping. "Tom! Lawd hab mercy! Tom——"

From behind her, through the closing door, they heard an unusual hubbub in the street.

"Stella—here Ah is——"

She stood before them, leaning against the door jamb, one hand behind her back. "Oh, Tom! They'se killed Cah'line—they'se killin' all the nigguhs——"

Tom drew nearer, his eyes open in alarmed fascination, his face washed with a dusky pallor. "Killed Cah'line——"

"Get mah babies, Tom. We gonter leave dis place, now."

"What's all dis, Miss' Cole?" one of the men hurled at her, jumping to his feet.

"Lawsy, you po' chile! What's de matter wid yu' han'?"

She brought it out from behind her, bleeding, crushed, pulpy. "Rock hit me," she said, straightly. "Git de babies, Tom. We gotter go."

"Whar we gwine?"

"Gawd knows. Dey's all over town by now. Hung two nigguhs on Capitol Avernoo; a man he hit Cah'line

wid a rock, an' dey stomped all over her. Listen to 'em!" She shrieked this, half turning to the front. "Whar's Ed 'n' Will? Whar's de baby?"

Tom snatched at his hat; the committeemen reached for theirs. "Let's go out de back way. Diana's mindin' de babies, all de boys 'cep' Ed's dar; he's out in de alley. Can we go to de chu'ch?"

"Dey's burnin' de Meth'dis' chu'ch down de street."

"Police?"

"Won't he'p none."

One of the men spoke up. "Mah boss, Mistus Rylan, he tole me ef trouble ever come, to git in his cellar an' he'd pertec' me. We kin go 'cross lot. You all go on; I'm gwine to go by for Mamie an' de folks upstairs."

Stella rounded up the four larger children, took "Babe" on her arm, and steered Tom and two others of the committee across back fences, and obliquely through hot July fields of sturdy smartweed and brown-dusted grass. As they came out of an alley, just a block away from the Rylan back gate, they saw a moving flood of figures down the street two blocks away. The thinned tumult reached them. They sneaked across, running; Stella waved her bruised hand spasmodically. "Lawd, Lawd!"

Mrs. Rylan came at once in answer to her cook's excited message. "Gracie will show you the way to the cellar. I hope you'll be safe there. My husband phoned me that the rioting was serious."

In the underground dimness Stella appropriated for her sobered flock a garden bench, its back broken, standing on end in one corner. Tom's coat, spread in a barred chicken crate, made a pallet for "Babe."

"Keep mah place fuh me, Diany," she whispered fiercely. She helped the new arrivals get fixed on barrel tops, soap boxes, a rickety wheelbarrow, even an old set of bed springs tucked away in the darkest corner.

"Maw, will dey git us heah?" the children repeated in panicky insistence.

Stella smelled again the acrid liniment which had come through the crude bandage. "Ain' yo' pappy heah? Ain' he said de Lawd gwineter pertec' us? An' ain' de white man sont us heah? You shet up 'n' go ter sleep."

There were more than twenty in the big cellar finally; but the bacon and greens held out, and the ominous rioting only once howled through the street just outside.

Long after the uproar had quieted, Tom rose reverently from his cramped knees, stained by the lime on the floor. "Dar now! Ain't de Lawd done shelter' his own?"

"Amen, brudder! Amen!"

The third morning, Gracie came down with a lamp, followed by Mr. Rylan. "It's safe now," he announced. "The police are at last keeping order. . . . You can go home."

"De Lawd bless you, suh, an' yo' chillun an' all yo' folkses. De Lawd pertec' you——"

He brushed aside their tearful gratitude. "I was only too glad I had the chance," he said simply.

They stumbled into the sunlight, squinting with weakened eyes.

"I thought I'd die in dat place," one young woman chattered.

"You'd a died ef you wuzn't dar," an older one corrected her.

They started back across the parched fields. One by one they separated, until only the Coles and another family were left. When they came to their block, a hopeless depression gripped them. The packed row of houses across the streeet was a gray patch of ashes, where an occasional smoke-mist still climbed. Their own house was half-wrecked: panes broken, furniture hacked wantonly, the house torn and trampled as if a cyclone had

driven through it. Tom's favorite new Bible, given by his congregation, his few gift books, were wrenched apart and scattered about the yard. The china and pans had been smashed. On the sidewalk was a charred pile of clothes; Ed's new suit, Babe's little pink shoes, one end of a sheet Miss' Land had given Stella last Christmas. . . . Nothing was as it had been.

On the top kitchen shelf, hidden in hoarded newspapers, Tom discovered the tattered old family Bible he had bought from an agent just after the marriage. God had protected His word. . . .

There were no negroes to be seen on the street. Babe gooed uncertainly, Diana, who was only ten, cried her tears into the gingham slip of the baby she was holding. The boys looked on in simple wonder, unable to comprehend how things could change so.

An old negro hobbled by on a stick. "Whar's everybody, Brudder Jinkins?"

"Mos'ly driv' away. Some done lef' town fer good. Reckon Ah'se goin' back to Memphis. Dey doan' have no riots dar."

"When you gwine?"

"Mawnin' train, de ten-ten."

"We'se gwine too."

Stella listened without comment. There was no reason to stay here.

Tom talked to the two police at the next block. "They started to run away all the niggers, Uncle. Then they got better sense. Who in hell would do the work, if the niggers left? You don't have to go now."

Tom thanked them, and went on over to Judge Land's. Stella's week's wages were unpaid. The courteous Judge, upset at this conflict between the lower elements of both races, did his best to change Tom's mind. "Ah gotter go,

Jedge. Dey's wu'thless nigguhs an' po' white trash ev'rywhere; but dey don't have trouble lak dis ev'rywhere."

He withdrew from the bank all his savings, which were deposited with the church's money, careful not to disturb the congregation's balance.

They reached the station early. The Jenkins family was already there; they had been drowsing since sun-up in the colored waiting-room. Tom went to buy the tickets. Here was a hitch. The money would not stretch to cover fares for all of them to Memphis, even with half-fares for the three oldest, and Babe and little Will free.

"You can get tickets for Adamsville, and have two dollars left over," said the uninterested agent. He knew the peculiarities of negro finance.

"Aw' right."

On the train, the little Coles and Stella were squeezed into one seat; elder Jenkins, Tom, and two other traveling negroes found a compartment together. The fugitive preacher was at once at home; he expounded the Africanized doctrines of the Baptist faith interminably. "Hit's only grace what kin save," he repeated. "Does de Lawd's grace dwell in yo' heart? Is you been bawn agin?"

Finally one of the strange negroes, who was highly impressed with the insistent doctrine, drew out from Tom the vague state of his plans. "Ah'll fin' somethin' to do," the black tongue of God concluded.

"An' you doan't know nobody in Adamsville? Doan't you belong to no lodge, or nothin'? Ain't you a Risin' Star, or a Sunshiner?"

Tom rubbed a shiny mahogany ear in earnest reflection. "Ah does belong to de Sons an' Daughters of Ancient Galilean Fishermen, for a fack."

"Dar now! Now, nigguh, I knows Adamsville, for-

rards an' back'ards. You git off at de Union Depot, den walk down to Avenoo C, an' go east twill you gits to de lodge. 'Bout Thuhty-fo'th Street. Dey'll fix you up."

They reached the lodge; its chairs furnished a place for the younger Coles to munch cold fish sandwiches and cram overripe bananas, while Tom went househunting. "Jus' you walk out to Joneses' Hill, in West Adamsville. You kin find a house, an' maybe a job with it." The business agent was full of suggestions.

At the first corner, the old negro considered carefully. West? . . . One horizon appeared an endless level; the other ended in a gentle hill climbing high above the houses at its base. "Dat mus' be dis Joneses' Hill."

He walked due east. On and on he plodded, on the lookout for the railroad yards that ran just below the hill; but there were no tracks to be seen. At last he struck Highland Boulevard, and then the slope to the mountain. The railroad must lie beyond it. He ambled aimlessly up the long dummy line to the breezy gap, then followed the curving road to the south. There were no houses here, only a sleepy July woodland.

Jays jawed at him from towering blackgums and bluegums, tiny hedge birds, flushed by his approach, whirred noisily into leafy coverts. He feasted on plump blackberries pocketed in a moist hollow, disturbing two quarrelsome chipmunks, who continued to scold after he had passed them. A homeless cur sidled cautiously, sniffed, was satisfied, joined his train.

He found a good stick, and walked on. Must be a railroad somewhere.

He stopped at last before a vacant house, old and decrepit, with sagging front porch, broken panes stuffed with weathered brown newspapers, a general air of rundownness. Maybe he had gone the wrong way. He decided to knock and ask. He knocked at the front door.

No answer. He peered through the dusty, fly-scarred windows. Nothing inside, except one broken-down bed and piles of dusty yellowed papers on the floor. He walked laboriously around the house, looking in at each window. No one within. There was a good table in the kitchen, a rusted stove, an old clothes basket hanging on the wall beside a broken lantern, a dilapidated splint-bottomed chair. He came around to the front again.

The shade of the lonely spreading oak before the front porch was attractive. He sat down upon some cushioning chigger-weed. The July afternoon wore on; he slept.

He woke at the sound of feet sending the gravel flying. A white man approached.

"Hey, nigger, what you doing there?"

He got to his feet, his hat off. "Ah'm lookin' for Joneses' Hill, suh. Done los' mah way."

"I reckon you have! Jones' Hill is in West Adamsville, six miles from here. Live there?"

"Aimin' to."

"Where do you live now?"

"Ah jus' come to town, suh. Ain't picked out mah house yit."

Nathaniel Guild considered him. Looked like a respectable negro. "You married?"

"Yes, suh. Me 'n' mah ole 'ooman got five chillun, fo' boys an' one girl."

The white man looked abstractedly into his face. "I'm looking for a tenant for this house—someone who can keep an eye on the place, and do a little day work now and then."

There now! Tom had never doubted for a moment that the Lord would provide. His tone was persuasively eager. "Lawdy, boss, Ah's jes' de man you's lookin' for! Ah does all kin's of wu'k, an' mah ole 'ooman is sho' a powerful cook."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. You can come in, for three dollars a month rent. The house can be fixed up, and I'll see that you get more than enough work to pay it off. We may have work for you every day soon. If your wife's a good cook, Tom, you send her over to that new house you see yonder, to Mr. Judson; say Mr. Guild sent you." He walked back through the gate. "There's an excellent spring just at the bottom here; and if you can find any garden truck behind the house, you're welcome to it. There are some tomatoes, I know, and some turnips. If you want some seeds, Mr. Judson will let you have them. . . . Oh, by the way, here's your key."

When these suggestions had become realities, Stella was vehement in her praise of the Judson place. "Dat Miss' Mary, now, she's a sho' 'nuff lady! She order me 'roun' jes' lak Miss' Land useter. Dis is one gran' place, Tom."

The children scattered over the mountain, like the hedge rabbits they soon became acquainted with, and grew sturdy and strong from the pioneering. Old Tom learned the countryside, and particularly the negro settlement two miles back through the trees. Lilydale had a thriving Baptist Church, the First Zion, which competed vigorously for converts with the Nebo Methodist congregation, two hilly blocks away. Tom soon became an elder, and on the loss of the pastor, who was indicted as a murder suspect, the Georgia preacher naturally succeeded to his place. On weekdays Tom found himself in daily demand, as Hillcrest Subdivision expanded and developed. Even Ed, the oldest of his boys, found work for his strong sixteen-year muscles in the road-making. Jim and Will went to the city school, while Diana tended Babe, to let Stella cook for the Judsons.

Tom's keen instinct soon located the isolated hen roosts

in the valley, and the more unprotected ones at the foot of the mountain. Surely the Lord's anointed deserved chicken.

With the knowledge that a chicken dinner awaited him on his return, his Sunday sermons gained unction and elegance. He was regarded as the most powerful disputer in this section of the valley, and his exhortations always secured a big turnout for the baptizing in Shadow Creek.

He felt welded to the mountain. He was caretaker of the whole estate, and lord of his half of it. He felt superior to the mere Lilydale negroes, even those who owned their own homes; it was more to be good enough to live near Mister Judson. As for the Adamsville negroes, his scorn for them boiled over weekly in his sermon. "Them crap-shootin', rum-soppin' Scratch-Ankle nigguhs——" The self-righteous congregation shivered delightedly as he pictured the sure hell-fire for the modern "Sodom-'n'-Gomorry."

Life had evidently provided a firm and pleasant routine for this wandering apostle of the Lord.

XVI

TOM COLE shifted his left leg from its cramped under position, replacing it over the right. He was careful not to let his heel scrape the shiny painted floor of the outer office of the Snell-Judson Real Estate and Development Company; white folks were particular about scratches. He had been waiting since eight-thirty for Mr. Judson to come in from the mountain; it was now after ten. It wasn't his fault if Mr. Judson was late. He hadn't done anything to deserve what Mr. Judson had said a week ago come next Friday, that waiting was the best thing he did.

He considered a patch once neatly covering the left knee with owlish deliberation. "My ole 'ooman's a powerful patcher," he told Peter, the gap watchman, when the mend was new. "Say she gonter patch mah britches wid shoe leather, she do."

That was a long time ago; the patch had bulged out on one side, and torn loose. He picked carefully at the frayed gap, widening it. Maybe Mr. Judson would notice it—it was about time he got that brown suit the boss wore around the garden in the morning.

He brought his mind back with an effort to what he had come for. He went over the figures again, painfully printed on the back of an envelope picked from the kitchen trash-basket. He rehearsed carefully what he would have to say. It wouldn't be hard to get that thirty-five dollars. Maybe he ought to ask for forty, or forty-five; that would leave something for himself and Stella.

He'd have to try, some day, to get more out of Miss' Mary for the First Zion Church. The organ money was overdue; and there was a second-hand red carpet at Geohegan's that would just fit the Sunday School room.

He snorted aloud, to the amazement of the stenographer busily at work in the corner. Shaking her head, she returned to her machine. . . . That Scales Green and the 'coon dog he wanted to sell, at church last Sunday! Wanted two dollars for an old yellow pup that looked like he'd only chase cows. Probably picked him up; the dog ought to be in the pound. Maybe he stole him. That was a nice 'coon dog that storekeeper Carr had; there was one just like him running around the Ellis Dairy below the Thirty-Eighth Street road. If he caught that dog roaming around Mr. Judson's place, he'd show them! Anyhow, Pup and Whitey were good 'cooners, he didn't need any more. You had to feed dogs somehow.

He mustn't forget about the cow-feed, or the saddle.

Paul Judson walked briskly in, an aster blue-purple against the soft gray lapel. "Hello, Tom, you here? I thought you were to prune those forsythias this morning."

"Miss' Mary done tole me to go by Dexter's an' have de side-saddle fixed, suh. One of de sturrup strops is broke. Ah had to come in for cow-feed an' oats."

"Get an order from Miss Simpson for the feed. And drive by the Union Depot on your way out; there's a box of fruit trees to set out on the hill across the gap."

He passed into the inside offices.

When he crossed over to the title room, half an hour later, Tom still sat in the same place, the top rim of the folded order showing neatly above the sweat-band in the cap on the negro's lap. "Still here?"

Tom rose awkwardly, puffing out his lips in uncer-

tainty. "There wuz sump'n else Ah wanted to see you 'bout, suh."

"Well?"

"Ah wanted to ax a favor, Mr. Judson."

"What is it?"

"Ah wondered ef you could spare me a loan, suh? Make an edvance?"

"What do you want it for?"

The crumpled cap fell to the floor; Tom stooped and picked it up. "We done decided to sen' Diana to de Tuskegee school, suh. You got some of mah money; an' Ah's been savin' till Ah's got thuhteen dollars. She kin wu'k out in Tuskegee, an' make mos' of her 'spenses. She's goin' to take millinery."

"How much do you need?"

"Thuhty-five dollars, suh. Dat's for de fu'st year. She'll hatter go two years."

Paul considered the matter; a sigh of irritation escaped him. Higher education for negroes might be a good thing, in some cases; it was usually a waste of time. There was something wrong with the idea of it; a serving class ought, naturally, to remain uneducated. Education had a tendency to stir up unrest. Negroes who knew too much might seem respectful, but there was a suspicious glibness about them that warned that they had acquired something which, if it became formidable or wide-spread, might question the social framework on which Adamsville and the South were built. Still, Diana seemed a hard-working girl; it might do no harm.

"All right. Whenever she's ready to go, you can have the money."

"Thank you so kin'ly, suh. Ah'll pay back every cent——"

"Don't forget those fruit trees, Tom."

While Diana was finishing her first year, Tom's pros-

perity became too much for him. He had kept his eyes on the plump Wyandotte pullets at the Ellis Dairy, the same place that had lost a prized possum dog six months before. There was an eight-foot fence, with two feet of barbed wire at the top; and he knew that the Ellis boys had guns, and used them. But the chicken runs were behind the cow barns, and thus hidden from the house; and he had discovered an opening under the rear of the fence, where a mere trickle remained of the roystering April freshet. This gap was protected only by stakes angled inward from within the fence; and the moist ground allowed the central three to be worked up with ease.

He chose a May night, moonless and peaceful. It was almost one o'clock when he made his wet way under the fence, and followed the chicken-wire to the roosts. His fumbling fingers found the staple which held the lock chain. He pulled his hammer out of one of the "croker sacks," inserted the claw and pulled. It was hard in starting, then came easily; only the last pull resulted in a subdued and nerve-wracking screech as the metal curved out of the hard wood. He let the heated staple down quietly, and opened the door. The hens kept up a sleepy clutter; now was the time to use all his skill and tact.

He moved his hand from the wall along the pole, until it collided with the first warm feathers. His mind wandered to a memory of a night when he had seen an owl steal one of Mr. Judson's prized game hens. The thief had settled on a tree limb occupied by the hen, and gradually commenced shoving. The hen sleepily gave way. As she came to the end of the lopped-off limb, she had fallen, and the bird of prey had caught her before she reached the ground. Then Tom had fired. . . . Good thing nobody was watching him!

There was a smothered gurgle as his fingers closed around the neck. Deftly he twisted the head until the bones gave, then slipped it into the bag. Another, and another—the fowls had increased their drowsy disturbance, but were not yet alarmed.

He got two more, then decided that he had enough. No need to be a hog about it.

He started back for the door; his knee hit a feeding trough with a sudden crack. The noise was not great; but at the same moment a voice rang out, "Come out, nigger, I've got the door covered. Come out, or I'll shoot hell out of you."

Lordie, lordie! No use lying low; there was no other door to the henhouse, and if he waited until morning, he was caught sure.

"All right, suh, Ah's comin'."

He slid open the door a trifle; the light of a lantern lit on the ground cut its way in. "No tricks, now. Drop whatever you've got, and come out with your hands in the air—or I'll blow your head off."

"Ah ain't doin' no tricks, boss. Doan' shoot, for de Lawd's sake!"

"Come on, or——" came another voice.

He slid fearfully out, his arms raised. He stood blinking in the sudden shine.

From his left two figures closed in, shotguns half raised. "Just one old nigger, Ned; we'll phone the constable and turn him over."

"Lawdie, lawdie! Doan' give me to no constable; Ah ain't done nuthin!"

"How many chickens did you get, you black——"

Tom spoke volubly. "Ah thought dis was Mr. Joneses' roos', cap'n, an' he said Ah could come in some night an'——"

"Why, I know that nigger. Didn't you bring in Mr. Judson's Jersey last month for service?"

"Yessuh, dat Ah did. Ah's a minister of de gospel, an' ef Ah's made a little mistake tonight, Ah'll swear ter Gawd never to——"

"Bring him along."

"Lawd, boss, doan' send me to jail. Dey'll give me five years. Let me go dis time, . . . Ah won't never——"

"Come on——"

Ah's a minister of de gospel, suh, an' ef Ah's arrested, what will mah flock think? Ef you lets me go——"

"How many hens did you get?"

"Fo', suh; fo' or five."

"I'll give you four or five seconds to get out of here. And you leave Adamsville, do you hear me? We know you. We're too busy to waste time around the criminal court. But I warn you, get out! If I catch you around this town again, I'll have Judge Hawkes send you up for ten years. Git!"

"De Lawd will reward you, suh, for——"

He raised the shotgun suggestively. "Three seconds left. Git!"

Minus cap and bags, Tom "got"—stumbling into the brook ditch on his face, then hurrying up the stream, and running blindly through the woods to the road, and so to the mountain. He sat down at last on the crest, a stitch wracking his side.

What chance did he have, with the Ellis boys after him with shotguns? Maybe he could lie low for a while; keep on the mountain, until the shotguns' energetic memories had turned to other things. He shuffled along the outcrop, then turned in to avoid the cactus that punctuated the hillock before Locust Hedge.

Mammy Stella was waiting for him. "Get them hens?"

"Ah got hell, Stella. Ah gotter clear out er Adamsville; dem Ellis boys done said so."

"Whar you gwine?" Her marital suspicion strengthened his resolve; a holiday from home had its advantages.

"Ah 'lowed Ah'd walk down ter Hazelton 'r Coalstock. Ah could get somethin' to do 'roun' de rollin' mill."

"What de chu'ch gonter do?"

"Brudder Adams he kin preachify tell Ah comes back."

"Why 'n' cher stay here?"

"An' git shot?"

She dismissed him, in the limp dawn, with wifely solicitude. "Don' cher be up to no tricks, Tom, or Ah 'low Ah'll pull all yer wool out when Ah git hol' of you."

"You'll see me when you see me, ole' 'ooman." And he was gone.

One warm morning in the April following, the Judsons' watchman and man-of-all-work, Peter, hesitated before his mistress, a barrow of uprooted poison-ivy poised in the grip of sturdy old hands, which were immune from the noxious irritation. "Ah done got a letter f'um Tom Cole, Miss' Mary."

"Where is he?"

"He's dead."

"You got a letter from him?"

"No'm; it was f'um de man he wu'ked for, in Coalstock. Died Chuesday las' week, de letter said. Dey buried him. Ah done tol' Stella."

"That's too bad, Peter. I'll have to speak to Stella." Her heart went out to the black woman, who had lost her husband; what if it had been Paul! She determined to turn over to the widow an old black silk that she had noticed the wrinkled eyes coveting.

The gift was lavishly appreciated.

"Thank 'ee, thank 'ee, Miss' Mary. Ah'm gwineter fix it up wid puhple—it'll make a gran' mo'nin' dress!"

"You didn't go to the funeral?"

"Ah ain't got no time to waste on no funerals, Miss' Mary, 'less dey's closer'n Coalstock."

Jim, the second boy, joined Ed in work upon the mountain; Will and Babe continued at school, although Stella grumbled about a sixteen-year-old negro bothering with books, when a job was handy.

Diana arrived home the last of May. The whole family surrounded her admiringly, as she hung the framed diploma on the sitting-room wall.

"Hit's beautiful," Stella said simply, as the daughter pointed out the school buildings in the half-tone oval in the center.

There was no opening, however, for a negro milliner in Adamsville. Tired with the futile search for work prepared for by her education, she replaced Stella in the Judson kitchen, to allow the elder woman the greater freedom which "washin'" permitted. With the coming of the clearing gangs, Will joined his two brothers at the work, leaving only fourteen-year-old Babe at school. Even he longed for the jingle of pay-day wealth in his overalls. One day he announced at home that Mr. Hewin had taken him on as a helper. "Three dollars a week, maw. What good is school, anyway?"

Then began a new period in the life of the Cole boys. The mountain had taken them to its red bosom; the lesson of isolated self-reliance which it had taught to Pelham Judson came in parallel form to them. They were a gang, four strong, which could cope with any equal number of Lilydale negroes, or Scratch Ankle or Buzzard Roost rock-throwers. If a larger number got

after them, there was the mountain they could retreat to; its rocky reinforcement and refuge furnished safety.

Stella scolded them sharply on the night when they had fought the Harlan Avenue white boys. "Let them Lilydale niggers fool wid white trash, ef dey wants to. De Judsons is quality, don't you fergit; you let dat white trash be. Fight wid you' own kind. Ef a white man gin you any trouble, you let Marster Judson fix 'im."

The lesson sank in. They were quality negroes, lords of the mountain domain. Stocky Jim was the champion rough-and-tumble fighter of the Zion Church. "Ah kin lick any three Neboes wid mah toes an' teeth," he would boast in religious snobbery. Tom had had one of Mr. Judson's shotguns, to warn off marauders; the care of this descended to Ed, as the oldest, and the boys took turns in potting rabbits, flickers, and an occasional partridge, with shells borrowed from the big house. First choice of the game went to the Judson table; but there was enough left to fill out the scanty Cole menu of corn-pone, sow-belly, molasses, and a seasonal mess of greens.

The boys practiced hurling outcrop boulders at the big-trunked oaks until they could skin the bark four times out of five at fifty feet. The outdoor life, the clearing work, the continual "toting" of water from the icy spring in balanced buckets, toughened them into exuberant manhood. They did not marry, although Stella constantly scolded the older pair for "hangin' 'roun' dem Avenoo C skirts"; and their wider rambles added grass-ripened watermelons and plump chickens to the fare.

Diana, alone of the family, found life on the mountain bleakly unhappy. She possessed a frightened, dusky beauty. Adolescence had changed her from a gawky immaturity to a lush roundness, large-lipped and full-

figured, and yet with the well moulded face and the soft brown texture of skin that are occasionally found in a mixture of blood. From some Aryan ancestor she had inherited features the reverse of negroid; and she revealed nothing of the unpleasant pertness often developed in the twilight realm where black and white intermingle.

The liberating touch of education had been just potent enough to dissatisfy her with the old, and too weak to furnish a self-sufficient substitute. The world of books she had begun to explore at Tuskegee; there was no one in the family group who could go with her in the talk or the dreamings that this led to. The haphazard home life, the thick enunciation, worse at meal times, these were the things she had begun to get away from; she could not reconcile herself to the old slough of "nigger" life.

The church gave her some outlet. She joined the various Ladies' Aids, took over an advanced Sunday School class, wheedled different ones of her night-restless brothers to escort her to the Zion sociables, the chitterling suppers, the frequent revivals. But here an obstacle lay in the women of the congregation. No newfangled notions for them, thank you. They considered her careful accent, her ideas borrowed from more progressive members of her race, an affront to Lilydale's time-hallowed way of doing things; she was shouldered into the background. The few educated negro men, Wyatt the druggist, Tom Strickland, who owned the five-story building in the city, the young lawyer who lived in Lilydale, were married, or were disagreeable. They found in her only a desire for expanding culture, not its achievement; they did not seek her out.

The isolation frequently overcame her. Nauseated by the glut of the slipshod home living, she would pull

open one of her text books . . . often to sit and cry, unable to read a line.

"You're gettin' peaked, Diany," Stella worried. "Huccome you ain't so pert as when you come back? . . . You got a good job."

"I'm all right, mother."

One night she overheard the older boys fussing at Babe. "You too little, kid. Ef a cop started chasin' you, yo' short legs wouldn't do no good."

"Ah kin run faster 'n you, Ed. An' 'Banjo' said Ah could come along," he whined. "Maw, tell Ed 'n' Will 'n' Jim not to leave me behin'."

"Where are you boys going?" asked Diana.

Ed fidgeted sourly. "Aw, nowhar."

"Ah'll tell you," said Will boastingly. "Goin' to de Union Depot, to see what we kin pick up."

"Mother, will you let yo' boys rob cars?"

"Shut up, won't you?" Ed injected savagely.

Stella looked helpless. "You boys 'll be careful, won't you? Yo' pappy got caught. . . . Babe's too little."

"You know that that 'Banjo' Strickland is a regular criminal, ma—even his brother Tom says so."

Stella closed her mouth. "Dey kin look after deyselves, Ah reckon. Dey's growed up."

To belong to a family of day-laborers and common thieves! In passionate rebellion she told herself that it was more than she could bear.

For several days she studied the poison labels in the Judson medicine chest. If she only knew which would be painless. . . .

She picked her dark way, a few nights later, over the rough planking across the nearest ramp—the excavating had begun, which meant better pay for the boys, and a mountain full of white and negro workers. The chill breathing of the Autumn wind drove her limp calico

skirts swirling around her body. As she entered the darker tree-shadows beyond, she stopped suddenly, a chiller fear shaking her. A dark figure stood squarely in front, a figure that made no motion of stepping out of her way.

"Where you goin', nigger?"

He was one of the men she had seen working, a slouching young fellow—a white man.

"Home," she said, in a roughened voice.

She endeavored to brush past on the lower side of the pathway; the sheer cut of the hill obstructed the upper.

He put out a friendly hand, catching her arm in rude assertiveness. "Not so fast. You're the Cole gal, ain't you?"

"I'm Diana Cole. I'm going home."

Her tone trailed off weakly, as he stepped closer. She could see his face now, uncertain eyes squinting directly at her.

"Hey, good-looker," he dropped to an ingratiating whisper, with a leer to increase the effectiveness of his words. "What you say—wanter show me a bit of good time? What you say?"

She tried to shake herself free. "Let me go! Don't dare touch me——"

"Don't say dare," Jim Hewin said warmly, his left hand sliding appraisingly up the bared softness of her right arm. "Plump, eh? Nice piece of dark meat. I like you; I'll treat you right."

A gust of sudden fright, the blind fright of the female when her well-ordered maiden state is first threatened, shook over her; her arm lashed out impotently.

He stepped aside to avoid the blow.

"If you touch me. . . . I'll kill you. . . ." Her words were gasps.

He held her arms again, pushing them behind her until her face was close before his. "You black devil! I've a mind to——"

Then he pulled her closer, fastening his dry lips against her protesting mouth. For a hushed second she took the unexpected caress quiescently; then fought, kicked, scratched, to get away. He held her firmly, shaking her until she ceased. Then he let her go.

She ran a few frightened steps, then turned in the dusky safety, facing him. Her mind held only an outraged hate; her feelings quivered and rioted in disquieting turmoil.

He smacked his lips broadly.

"You—you white trash——"

He faced her coldly. "When I want you,"—whistling, as though calling a dog, he turned up toward the crest—"you'll come. . . ."

Her heart panting in wrenching excitement, she listened to his retreating steps. She stared, helplessly rooted in the accusing silence. Her knees trembled; she waited to regain strength.

Then she moved heavily toward the house, entering by the rickety kitchen steps in the rear.

With a child's helpless seeking, she walked down the hall. She must tell her mother at once. She heard Stella's rocker moving monotonously on the sagging front porch. A loose board squeaked in soothing rhythm.

Sharply she visualized the simple, wrinkled face. . . . It could never understand. . . .

She turned wearily into her own room, and threw herself face downward on the bed. The loud pounding of her heart frightened her; she turned upon her back, staring at the constricted darkness of the blank ceiling.

XVII

AN old negro, his sleep-wrinkled, shiny coat and paint-stained overalls itchy from stubble acquired in a deserted barn, idled down the switching track that ran behind the Judson lands. His scrubby gray beard was stained with blackberries; his knees were gritty and dank from kneeling beside the brook that slipped over the quartz ledges beside Billygoat Hill. In doubtful cogitation he knocked cinder and chert clusters down the steep fills, swinging his hickory stick with an air of ancient mastery.

"Lawd bless me, look at dem long houses!" as he passed the lower end of Hewintown.

A white man eyed him closely, a short man with a tarnished metal badge on his ore-stained coat.

"Got any wu'k?"

The guard relit his pipe. "Too old, nigger."

"I kin tote a powerful lot."

The guard continued to stare off at Shadow Mountain. Whistling good naturedly, the old man continued down the track. "New houses! New fences! Things mus' be lookin' up!"

He observed the path that led to the crest just east of Hillcrest Cottage, and took instead the steep descent to the spring lot. He sniffed at the well-placed garden truck, noticed the ducks and the shiny duck house, skirted the widened concrete swimming pool, and came at last past the game house to the spring. From the tin dipper swinging on the twenty-penny nail he took a drink, first

clearing out his mouth several times and spitting the warmed water into the spillway.

He looked furtively around, up toward the big estate, then along the path to the eastern crest. He took up the two buckets empty on a concrete pump base, filled them three-quarters, balanced them, and made his careful way up the latter path.

When he reached the top, he skirted the ramshackle house. At the back he paused at the two half-barrel tubs redolent with laundry soap. He stooped over it, pouring in the first big bucket.

A heavy voice rang from the kitchen above him. "Hey, nigger, what you doin'?"

He turned a puzzled face toward the window. "Ah'm —Ah'm——"

A big roundish woman stepped out on the rickety porch. "Fuh Gawd's sake! Is you Tom?"

"Sho' Ah is." There was an aggrieved whine in his voice.

"You come back? Whar you been?"

He emptied the bucket, and brought the other to the bench under the back steps. "Ah been wu'kin'. Ah come back."

"We done got a letter sayin' you wuz dead."

He laughed broadly. "Ah ain't."

Tramping up the steps, he flung his wrinkled coat on its old nail above the lanterns, and sat down in a splint-bottomed chair, testing it carefully before he leaned back in it. "Got any breakfas', ole 'ooman? Ah's plumb starvin'."

She set out cold bacon, cold pone, a glass molasses pitcher with its top broken. "He'p yo'se'f, Tom. Ah's powerful glad you's home."

He spoke through a mouthful of bread and "long sweetening." "Ain't married agin, or nuthin'?"

"Ah ain't huntin' no mo' trouble."

She slid his emptied dishes into the loaded sink, and took up the two empty clothes baskets. "Come he'p me tote de clo'es back. Miss' Mary mebbe got somethin' for you to do."

At supper, the biggest kerosene lamp was lit on the middle of the table, and spread its smelly radiance over the reunited family. Ed and Jim had come in last, their cap-lamps still lit, their shirts clayey from the underground work. "Here's yo' pappy, boys, come back agin," announced Stella proudly.

Diana, her nerves on edge from another meeting with Jim Hewin, got in a side blow. "I suppose you've been with that 'Banjo' Strickland again, and couldn't get home in time for supper?"

"Aw, close yer trap," growled Ed. "Think you own the place!"

"Yer maw says you boys is wu'kin' hard."

Will, who possessed a good-natured sense of humor, chuckled appreciatively. "We sho' is! You know dat chicken-farm by de dam on Shadow Mountain, paw? We been wu'kin' powerful hard, an' dat's de Lawd's trufe!"

"We got fried chicken fo' supper, Tom," as Stella lifted the simmering pan with feigned indifference.

"An' dey ain't grow on no egg-plants, an' dat's a fack," continued Will.

"You'd a come in handy, paw, las' Sad'dy night," said Ed, who had recovered from his temporary ill-humor at Diana. "Ev'rybody's lef' de place 'cep' club-foot Jake Simmons; dey lef' him to watch. Me 'n' Banjo he'p'd him watch; we played poker, while de three boys poked off thuhteen hens an' a cockerel."

"And that isn't all that you all and 'Banjo' 'poke off,' either," interrupted Diana, her light brown face glowing

a shade darker. "What would yo' paw say if I told him all I know?"

"What's dis? What's dis?" His explosive tones regained something of the former authority.

Stella laughed comfortably. "Nuthin' at all, Tom. Diana got a fool notion dat de boys been meddlin' wid cars at de Union Depot; dat's all."

Tom scratched his head in profound silence; the rest of the family watched him with differing emotions. At length he spoke unctuously. "De Lawd he put chicken-roos'eses an' melon-patches whar dey is easy to get at; it ain't nacheral for a nigger to let a hen suffer dis vale of tribulation, or let a melon grow ole an' useless on de vine. Cars is different. Cars is different. You boys ain't got kotched at nothin'?"

"You bet we ain't!"

"Den Ah don't know nothin', an' Diana don't know nothin'. You'd better watch out, dat's all Ah say. Cala-boose never wuz no black man's frien'."

"We's careful, paw. We got regular jobs."

"Dat's all Ah say. Bring out mah Bible, Babe; Ah ain't read de Scripchers for two years."

"We done jined de union, paw," said Babe, laying the shaggy-eared family Bible in the yellow circle of lamp light. "De miners' union."

"A lot you all know about unions!" sniffed Diana.

Tom nodded reverently. "Unions is good. Ah am de resurrection an' de life, says de Lawd. De Lawd done sont unions to he'p his cullud chillun."

"An' Jim's de finansher secretary. He gits de money."

"Dat's good too. You boys is hustlers, lak yo' ole paw was."

The Cole life went on as if he had never been away.

Some weeks later, Stella Cole had just straightened up from the half-barrel tubs, to wring a soggy batch of

towels before "renchin'" them in the clearer water, when she looked up with that uncanny premonition of danger which lower animals and lower races possess. The ground shivered; then a hideous noise broke over the sunned and silent trees, deafening her. The vast growl of the dynamite explosion rang shrilly in her ears; she fell on trembling knees, praying.

The crash of falling timbers behind made her look around. The unsteady ground, she said afterwards, "shook lak you wuz shakin' a counterpane." The rickety step supports crumpled, the rotted square of the back porch crashed in on the bench of water-buckets below.

There was a droning noise in the air, the sound of running steps along the road passing above the house. Toward the farther mines, beyond her house and the next hill, she saw a palpable haze, smoke-like and yet not smoke, dulling the sky.

"Mah boys!" she gasped, and started running puffily for the front gate, and the road beyond.

She stood aside to let a screeching machine throb past her. It was Mr. Pelham; the sight of his tense and collected gaze reassured her. Mr. Pelham wouldn't let anything happen to her boys.

She shrank into the outer fringe of the tear-eyed, wailing Hewintown women, trying desperately to get some news. She wandered twice into the thick air at the top of the ramp, but the acrid heaviness drove her back. The men she spoke to cursed, shoving her aside. She slumped to the ground, moaning in inarticulate misery. Lord, they were all dead!

Then she saw Ed running with an empty bucket, his head bandaged, his face grimed and ferocious. "Ed! Eddie! Whar's Babe, an' Jim, an' Will——"

He stopped, coughing, gasping. "Jim's killed, ma. Dey brung out his body. Hit's yonder under dem trees. . . .

Babe's all right; ain't seed Will. Mebbe he's caved in." He hurried off, face set and purposeful.

"Mah Jim! Mah Jim!" She pulled her trembling body from the ground, and set off on unsteady feet toward the ominous trees.

The body was not there. "You might look in the Company stores, in Hewintown," said a sweet voiced girl, her face torn with sympathy.

"Thank 'ee, ma'am." She stumbled weakly off, her uncovered head dizzy from the excitement and the sun. Her lips repeated over and over, "Mah Will! Mah Jim!"

The sudden dark of the storeroom clouded her vision. From body to body she went. Here were the negroes. This bloodied face was like— No. She went on.

At length she found what she sought. Weak from exhaustion and shock, she crumpled up beside the limp warmness that had been her second son.

Here Diana found her, a Diana pale and frightened, her right arm bandaged to the shoulder, blood caked in dusky crimson at the height of her breast. "Mother! Is this. . . . Jim?"

Stella raised herself drowsily. "Yeh, dis is Jim." She looked at the girl fearfully, a vague horror channelling her face. "Is Will daid too?"

"Will's all right. . . . You come home with me."

Stella faced the girl when they were outside. "Will all right? Babe all right?"

Diana nodded.

"What's wrong wid yo' arm, girl?"

"Nothin'. A pane of glass scratched it. It's all right."

Jim's funeral, the Sunday following, was a notable affair. A committee of fellow-members from the union marched first. The ornately rosetted Brethren of the

Morning Star, and the proud ranks of the Sons and Daughters of Ancient Galilean Fishermen, came next. Last were the comfortably filled livery carriages, furnished by the lodges as the proper foil for their flamboyant officers. Stella brought out her old black silk, in sorrow and pride. Tom's successor, Brother Adams, preached the funeral sermon. "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," was the burden of sermon and song. There was no suggestion among the elder heads that the devil, or the Birrell-Florence-Mountain Mining Company, had had a hand in this particular wonder, this harvest of dumb death.

Tom, busied with funeral sermons for other victims, received gratefully the benefits from the two lodges. "Ain't dar nothin' f'um dat union Jim set sech store on?"

"Unions don't have benefits, paw. We gwine ter git our benefit strikin'," explained Will painfully.

"Lots of use dey are, den! Whuffur you belong to su'thin' what ain't got no benefits?"

Diana and Stella sided with the father, but the boys were determined. "Dey say de comp'ny ain't gwine pay no damages for killin' de miners. We gwine strike an' *make* 'em pay!" insisted Will.

"We gotter git money somehow, ain't we?" said Ed, grouchily.

"Dat's foolishness," argued Tom. "How you think you gwinter make white folks do what dey don't want to, huh? Dis union business is foolishness."

The unusual excitement of several sermons a day brought on an attack of Tom's old sickness. At Paul Judson's suggestion, he walked himself over, one boiling afternoon, to the free ward of the "horse-pittle."

Less than two weeks after his limping departure, old

Peter accosted Mary Judson respectfully, as she stepped into her electric at the side door of Hillcrest. "Ole Tom Cole's done for dis time, Miss' Mary."

"Yes, Peter? Are you sure?"

"Dey cut him open in de horse-pittle, an' he's dead sho'. A nigger what wu'k dar done tol' me."

Stella was close-lipped about the matter. "Dey do say he is daid dis time, Miss' Mary. Too much preachin' ain't nacheral."

Diana saw, for the fourth time, the slouching figure in the dusk of the mountain roadway, as she returned that night from the big house. She came up to him with certainty, by now used to the mixed menace of his presence. "What are you hangin' around me for, Jim Hewin?"

"You know what I want, brown baby. Aw, don't be so damn' stingy!"

He took her familiarly by her dusky, well-rounded arm; she shook him off petulantly. "I've told you——"

He held the arm more confidently. "You ain't in no hurry. We'll walk up a piece——"

Her feet retarded, as he turned up the stubby grass-rugged path. He pulled her after him with a low chuckle of insolent arrogance.

Her tones were more docile, soberly argumentative. "Why don't you go to your white girl? You told me you were going to get married——"

"She kin wait."

They were deep in the obscurity of the oak thicket now; the path was cherty, grassless. She walked easily in front of him, then stopped in the topmost shadow, as the murky panorama of the night city opened before them. She stood wrapped in the dusky wonder of a sky stained with echoes of furnace fire, a dun horizon broken with twinkling patterns of streets and avenues.

Around her waist he coiled a determined arm; in her he saw the beauty that she found in the broken mystery below.

"Let's sit down."

Gathering her skirts close, she sat on the dry grass, shrinking slightly from his touch. He let her have her fill of the shining moment; but his hand continued its gentle stroking along her arm, her shoulders, the soft curve of her neck.

A subtle riot shivered out of nowhere into her emotions, an agonizing quiver so sweet that it must be wicked. Her distressed face besought his, "Don't, don't, Jim——"

He did not answer; nor did he stop. A wild pagan stir whipped her blood, giving the blasphemous counsel that she should throw herself into his arms. It was the proximity of the male calling to his mate; it was more—it was the answering tremor of the woman of a lower, darker race, the mountain wildness dominant in her blood, when chosen by the man of the higher, lighter strain.

The stern Puritanism of her training fought against this. She must save herself whole for a man of her own color; she thought of the negro poet's magnificent lines about the black Mary, who was to bring forth the black Messiah to lead his brethren out of bondage. . . .

"Gimme your lips, honey."

She pulled back, trembling, from the dominant triumph in his voice. His arm swept tightly around her, she was dragged against him. Her weakness melted to nothing in the presence of this mighty outer and inner strength.

Slowly she felt herself losing. Her prisoned hands struck out feebly against his face; yet even in her fighting she fancied that the man whose face was hidden in

the night before her was not the repulsive, leering mine foreman, but the dim white knight of her hid dreamings.

With startling suddenness she yielded to his command. His lips fastened to hers, clung there. She felt that the whole universe became a kiss; melted, eddied together into one point of mad moist contact. Her struggles to free her lips drew her closer to him. She was conscious of his hot hand pressing against her body, burning through the thin calico waist. Then she lost consciousness of bewildering details.

With rude courtesy Jim Hewin steadied her feet as she walked down the last sharp slope to the road.

He turned to leave; an arm detained him. Her tones were low and pleadingly sweet. "A good night one, now."

Head bowed, tired blood pounding, she slipped with furtive haste toward the darkened windows of the shack that was her home.

IV

THE CLASH

XVIII

JIM HEWIN picked his satisfied way over the ramp's top and along the road below, toward the gap and the gap offices. He eyed the midnight stars with unseeing animal contentment, sluggishly at peace with the world.

A voice from the watchman's hut blurred upon his hearing. "Hey, where you going?" The man peered closer. "Where the hell have you been? The old man's been looking for hours——"

"I been right over in Hewintown."

"He wants you, now."

"What's up?" Reawakened briskness bristled in his tones.

"Bringing in them carloads of miners."

"Oh!"

"He's in the guard auto by the machine house. Better hump yourself."

Jim idled off, then changed his gait to a run as he heard the preliminary whirr of the engine. "Hai!" he shouted, as the lighted nose turned up the hill. "Hai! Wait! It's Jim!"

Tom Hewin made room for him on the front seat. "Take this rifle. Got your automatic?"

They joined the three other cars, ran on too far by the viaduct, and doubled back. The thin pop of firearms reached them, then the distant crackle of a volley. The men hunched together excitedly, blood tingling at the prospective ambuscade of the man-hunt.

The wash of the headlight on the tall pines beyond the cut located the engine.

"There!" came Tom's stabbing whisper.

The cars coursed to the curve, and turned parallel, facing the tracks. The angry glare of four searchlights burned against the black figures huddled above the stalled train.

The startled crowd eddied together, then scattered in headlong panic. Gunfire thunder and pelting lead poured from the rows of rifles toward the fleeing bodies.

Jim sprang out, crouched beside the searchlight, blazed away. He ran forward, stumbling against a pungently resinous stump. He rested his rifle on it to aim. Crack! The clumsy figure halted, raised wild arms grotesquely, fell spinning toward him. He caught up with the foremost guards, and stood with them for a volley across the narrow railroad gulch.

"Come on," boomed Huggins, the deputy sheriff in charge, running to the top of the cut.

Jim followed.

A wounded miner on the left trembled to his knees; his pistol aimed uncertainly at the man ahead. Jim's automatic plupped; the man's face butted against the rocky ground.

"Hey, there," Huggins bellowed, "Whatcher stop for?"

"We're goin' on," a gunman below shouted back. "We're goin' on, I say."

"Go on, then," he replied, disgustedly.

"Don'cher hear him, Ed?" to the engineer. "Go on, he says."

"Ain't I going?"

The whistle wailed against the sky, the gunmen piled on cowcatcher and carsteps. The train choked laboriously up toward the company depot at Hewintown.

"None left," said Tom reflectively, joining Huggins on the crest.

"A few," the other grinned casually, his arm indicating the awkward blotches against the searchlit hillside. "Go back," he called to another deputy, "phone from the gap for a truck to carry them stiffs to the main office. It's been a morgue afore."

The shaken eight in the shadows beyond the fill saw all of it. Dawson kept his hand beside Wilson. "No you don't," as the hothead raised the pistol again, when the train coughed its way toward them. "Wanter make us all swing?"

"We could manage a get-away——"

Dawson pushed him into the car; the rest crawled in, sobered, sorrowing, fiercely resentful.

"God! What a story!" whispered Brant, the reporter.

Jensen's big voice shook tearfully. "Shot 'em down like rats, the black-hearted bastards! If I'd a gun——"

"No, you wouldn't," said the big organizer savagely, squeezed beside the silent son of Paul Judson. "You can't lick 'em that way. It's the last thing. . . . They'd call out their soldiers—where'd we be then? Oh hell! If we can just hold all the boys together, we can make 'em come crawlin' to us——"

"Can you?" whispered Pelham.

"I . . . don't . . . know," an answer as low. "We'll try."

Brant dropped off to catch the last edition of his paper; the others, for their various home car-lines. Only McGue accompanied Dawson to the Mecca, to sleep armed beside him. Pelham noticed the gray warning of daybreak staining the east, before he pulled down his shade and adjusted his splitting head on the chill pillow, to writhe through somber dreams.

The careless truckmen, satisfied with their load of thirteen, overlooked the black body hurriedly flung against the ties of the switch track. It was one of the Lilydale children, berrying in the early grayness, whose frightened tongue brought Stella the answer to her long night of uncertainty.

The other Cole boys had gone off to work, sure that Babe would turn up somehow. . . . Stella got a man from the Judson stable to help her carry over the dewed body on an empty barrow.

Babe's funeral was simple. "Suffer little chillun tuh come untuh me," said Brother Adams unctuously, "fuh ob sech is de Kingdom ob Hebb'n." A second fresh earth mound disturbed the irregularity of the Zion Cemetery meadow, with the name "Cole" painted on the scantling driven beyond the head.

This first-hand contact with the bloody struggle made Pelham hurl himself with dynamic energy into the strikers' cause. Dawson used him to make the Board of Trade endorse the conflict. Flaring headlines in the *Advertiser* and the *Times-Dispatch* warned of a general strike, which would tie up the whole industrial machinery of Adamsville.

"They'll never do it," Dawson repeated pessimistically. "We can't dislodge that Pooley bunch. But this hot air helps."

The young mining inspector, as yet unassigned to his duty by the State, preached organization to the miners of Coalstock, Hazelton, Irondale, and Belle Mary mines; he never failed to wind up with a stirring appeal for unity on the political as well as the industrial field. "Strike at your jobs, when you must; strike at the polls every chance you get! Let's drive the scabs out of the city hall, out of the sheriff's office, out of the legislature!

The government isn't going to leave you alone; why not make it your government?"

In hardened Democratic ears the brilliant insistence made little impression, although mining locals sprouted and flourished.

"He don't do any harm," Dawson confided to John McGue who had attached himself as the big man's private guard. "Let him spit fire if he wants to. My God, man! A state mining inspector as organizer! We'll have Paul Judson in the local yet!"

Sullenly the strikers held to their Hewintown homes, cowed by the armed guards from interfering with the spasmodic attempts of the convicts, negroes, and strike-breakers to keep the mine product up to normal. Formal notices of eviction came to them; but Ben Spencer reassured the disheartened committee. "They've got to follow the state law; that means delay. Tell the boys to sit steady till hell freezes over. They're sewed up."

Henry Tuttle rendered an exhaustive report upon the same matter to the managing committee of the directors. "We can go ahead, if you say——"

Paul Judson, at Judge Florence's nod, shook his decisive head. "Wait. We're not quite ready. When we are——"

After a thoughtful pause, the vice-president went on. "It's a good time to appropriate enough to outfit the State National Guard. We can't pay them directly, as the companies did in Colorado; the law's against that, Henry?"

The counsel nodded corroboration.

"But they'll appreciate new uniforms and guns. . . . You can never tell, you know. . . . I had a talk with Adjutant-General Rice last week; he approves heartily."

The matter was left to the vice-president, for action.

During these weeks of comparative inactivity, in spite of the details of strike work, Pelham found time to debate "Socialism the Remedy" with Burke Horton, an energetic lawyer-politician of near-radical views. The debate was the first of a newly opened community forum, under the auspices of Dr. Gulley's Free Congregation, which met in Edlin's Hall. The crowd was packed with Horton's followers, but the young Judson made his points tell.

This was one of the meetings to which Jane Lauderdale could go; she had followed every motion of Pelham's with her large, intimate eyes, from a wall seat to the right, not far from the platform. Continually his own eyes sought hers, to test the effectiveness of an argument, or to draw approbation and inspiration from the source that meant most to him. Whenever there had been opportunity, she had been in his strike audiences, a vivid, sparkling fountain of encouragement and enthusiasm. Pelham's watchfulness drew from his random hearers antagonism or sympathy, a groping for his meaning, a tardy stumbling after his flying feet; of her he drank cordial understanding and abounding love.

They left the hall together, and rode straight to her house. Lacking a home of their own, this house furnished an abiding-place for far-flung dreams and precious intimacies.

In her very restfulness he found a spur and a stimulus. Chin cupped in her down-turned fingers, seated in her favorite wicker chair, she mused above him, as he slouched on the rug at her feet.

"You were splendid tonight, boy; you're a cannibal at debating."

"I'd be sick of the whole bloody business," she smiled indulgently, "if it wasn't for you."

"Anyone would do just as well;" a denying finger caressed his hair possessively.

"Am I that unappreciative, Joan of Lauderdale?"

"Now you're poking fun. You don't deserve the taffy."

"It was only taffy?"

"I'm a good cook, you'll have to admit. No; you earned every word. I should think your father would have to be proud of you!"

"The oratorical prodigal . . . whose far country is the heaven your slim oxfords print."

"Not even wings?"

"We are forging them together."

Hearty delights these hours with the vibrant girl always were; but they were not as heady and intoxicating as he had imagined love would be. Perhaps too heady, in another sense; there was a lack somewhere, he meditated ruefully, as his car picked its way past the guarded entrances to the entrenched mountain. A prodigal son, he had called himself; but this was one of those itching hours when he envied the erotic mire of the earlier vagrant. His body hungered morbidly for the barely sampled flesh pots of the Meade bungalow, the perilous soilure of Butler's Avenue.

Night's dead peacefulness was the only reality. The moon froze ramp building and sagging shack into silver immobility; there could be no hour when bleeding forms lurched and died on this eternal background. Day's conflicts were shadowy impossibility; he could not take further part in the fantastic strife that meant death and suffering; he was caught in the midnight spell of the silent world.

But a gush of warm-blooded hatred welled over him—hatred that turned this silver heaven into an iron-red hell.

No; he was pledged fighter in the cause of the mountain that must be all men's. He was vaguely aware that this reborn fealty came from two mothering, radiant eyes, that watched his steps in light and darkness, and waited with shadowy arms to welcome him at war's end.

The morning's headlines obtruded on Paul Judson's attention, at his usual early breakfast. They caused no lightening of his accustomed frown. Uncertainly he fumed around the place. When he saw Pelham about to start for the city, he walked over and intercepted him.

"Your car woke us up at three last night."

"It was shortly after two when I got here."

"You'll agree with me that such hours are a bad influence on the boys. Your mother and I go to bed at ten. I can't have it."

Pelham did not answer, an ugly surge of anger upboiling within him.

"It won't do for Hollis and Ned. It isn't decent. They're bound to imagine you are keeping bad company —of both sexes——"

The wrath boiled over. "Father! You know I've been busy speaking—last night was the debate—you know I've been busy——"

His father's mouth closed to a thin line, then opened. "I can't have it. They don't know what you do with your time; I am glad of that. You'll have to leave the mountain."

Pelham stood his ground against the menacing stare. "I shall be glad to." There was a blank wrench of anguish within him, at the thought of leaving the familiar home; the mere difficulties of moving and settling again loomed mountain-high. "Your suggestion that I am going with bad companions is trash, and you know it." He hesitated, then drove on. "I'll leave by Saturday."

Paul turned away. "It will be a good thing."

His soul stinging with the father's injustice, he waited until the other had gone in leisurely certainty down the hill, and went in to his mother. "I'm to leave the mountain next Saturday, mother."

"It's necessary, Pelham. You have distressed your father in so many ways, I cannot see anything else for you to do."

Hurt pride spoke within him. "He said my late hours set a bad example for the boys."

"Yes . . . that too. . . ."

The words crowded out. "He said that I was late because I was going with bad companions, when he knows that's a lie!"

"Pelham, you shall not speak that way of your father to me."

"Mother, you know I've been at meetings and debates; you know how straight I've been. If he'd had his way, I wouldn't have been," he added with heated significance.

"What do you mean?" The unrehearsed query came against her will.

"When I was visiting at the Meades, he advised me to go to Butler's Avenue, mother—to go to the Red Light district—to go to the women there. That was his fatherly advice to me!"

Her face assumed a Puritanic severity, an alien look; she masked the tumult of her heart with this outward symbol of incredulity. "I cannot believe you, Pelham."

This was not the first occasion in which he had detected Mary's mobile features solidified into a harsh and unreasoning insensibility to fact. Whenever he or one of the other children had cornered the mother into a situation demanding condemnation of Paul, this self-gorgonized expression hardened upon her; it hid any admission of surprise, any criticism of the husband, for the moment. And he had observed that it served a

second function—persisted in, it gave time for the breach in the confidence in Paul to heal without apparent scar; henceforth she seemed to live in the self-imposed delusion that her husband had never been at fault. She would have held as a model wife the Red Queen, who had trained herself to believe six impossible things—presumably to her royal husband's advantage—before each breakfast.

Pelham had come to despise this obvious scouting of reality, this sentimentalizing which called facts what it would have them, not what they were. He retorted rather sharply, "There's no use not believing me. You know I am not lying; those were my father's words."

The smug overcast of unbelief became glacial; in serene security in her husband's impeccability, no matter what the facts might be, she turned toward the house. "I do not wish to have you discuss the matter any further." Then, a softer look in her eyes, she came back to where the son stood, and slipped an arm around his shoulder. "I'm doing this for your own best interest, mother's dearest boy; just as your father has decided in his wisdom that the time has come when you must leave the cottage."

There was a preliminary catch in her voice, affectionate, affecting, and not consciously affected. "God only knows, my son, how much I love you. . . ." She did not say any more, as if with a moment's clarity of insight she doubted the appropriateness of the inevitable formula. She threw a half-puzzled glance at him, that seemed rather to survey herself through him, as she left off talking, passed up the steps, and through the screen door—for all the world as if to screen herself further from his, and perhaps her own, searching scrutiny.

Well, that was ended. Pelham prepared to move. He found a vacant room with Mrs. Hernandez, wife of a

comrade. The outlook on symmetrical suburban homes, in a cheap section near the mountain's foot, was far different from the rolling vistas he had been so fond of; but at least his books and Sheff pictures reminded of the old place.

Jim Hewin, whose attentions to Diana continued, although without his first impetuous insistence, questioned the girl about the matter on one of their infrequent meetings under the dumb oaks on the crest. "Young Judson left home?"

"Last week."

"Squabbled with his old man?"

"I reckon so. . . . He just left." She continued listlessly to stare at the burning breath of the far furnaces.

At length her moping could not be ignored. "What's the matter, gal? What's on your mind?" He tried lightly to shake her out of her melancholy.

She responded weakly to his clumsy friendliness, her tongue locked as to its real trouble. She had come tonight to tell him; it seemed so easy, as she went over the matter in the cleared kitchen, waiting for the supper preparations to begin. She must tell him; he was entitled to know.

And now an icy self-disgust tied her. This man at her side—what could it mean to him, but a new peg for his obscene jokes? She had gone into this thing, at the last, willingly; she must see it through. It was not for him to guess at the faint unstirring life which her mad yielding had summoned within her.

She pretended to meet his mood, and left him sure that she had "got out of her spell." She cried herself and her hidden secret to sleep.

A spirit of lassitude lay over the mountain activities, with the departure of Pelham and the cumulative effect

of drenched days of torrid July sunshine. The dusty mornings were dry and crackly, the sullen summer air clung within the house at night. Futile breezes spurted uncertainly, emphasizing the arid discomfort. Twice thunder clouds massed over the nervous swelter, but were swept on before they could spill their desired comfort. Dust-weighted leaves hung limp, shrubs sickened and browned; only the weeds pushed blatantly upward.

Paul came out early the second day of the spell. The weight of the weather was unbearable. It was as if heavy blankets of heat were continually drifting down from the blazing heaven, too piercingly hot to be drowsy; it was as if he walked through these thick palpable layers of living, seering fire . . . like walking undersea of a vast liquid ocean of seething heat.

"You'd better get out of this," he announced shortly to Mary. "How would the Thousand Islands do? . . . The girls, and Ned too; his school doesn't open till late in September. Hollis had better stay with me; I need some help. . . . Shall I make reservations for Tuesday?"

Paul took Hollis with him, ten days later, for a run up to Washington connected with the delivery of steel to supply Allied orders, a mission in which all of his driving sympathies were enlisted. Nor was he out of key with his home city in this. Adamsville was one of the few Southern cities whose sympathies had been against the Central Powers from the beginning of the war. For the first two years the rest of the South fussed and thundered against English interference with the profitable pre-war cotton trade with Germany; an anti-English "freedom of the seas" became the day's slogan in the one section of the country where English blood still predominated. But the iron city never joined in this clamor; its spokesmen, its suave senators and publicists, could waive the block-

aded deflection of cotton, when the iron and steel demands of the Entente doubled the output of the mineral region. As the warring months marched on, quick shipments commanded untold bonuses; as of old, where a man's purse was, there was his heart. For commercial and patriotic reasons the company fretted impotently at the continuance of the strike at this time, especially when rail congestion became serious throughout the country. Paul's trip was one of many that the metal magnates had to make, to keep the wheels running as smoothly as possible upon the twice interrupted tracks.

This trip left the mountain home in the care of old Peter, who stayed on in his cluttered servant's room behind the kitchen. Diana Cole came in to clean up once or twice a week. Jim Hewin's persistent curiosity about the movements of the Judsons found full answer in her.

Two days after the master's departure, Peter hitched up and drove into town, to bring out two boxes of books from the office, and some sacks of cotton seed meal and oats. He dawdled around from store to store, showing off his temporary responsibility and dignity. The hot hours passed; he found relief in the cool shade of a side of the ice factory, where frequent squabbles among intent young negro crap-shooters were referred to him for his ponderous adjustments.

Diana, late in the afternoon, brought a pan of peas out to the mended yellow rocker on the front porch of the Cole shack, and commenced popping the viscid spheres out of the parched pods. At length her hands slowed; she stared into the red sunset beyond Hillcrest Cottage on the hill across.

She was struck by the odd reflection of the fiery glow in the kitchen windows. It was as if the late sun shone clear through the house. She rose agitatedly to her feet, the peas littering the steps, the pan halting against the

wilted morning-glory vines. "Maw!" she cried, panic in her voice. "Maw! Will! Come here——"

A thin shimmer of smoke jerked restlessly above the kitchen end of the big house. "That ain't—fire?"

"An' Mr. Paul an' ev'ybody gone!"

"Will," she turned hurriedly, "run to Hewintown—the men can save lots. I'll phone the Fire Department——"

She raced up the familiar road, her mind working feverishly. Far behind Stella panted. There had been no fire in the kitchen range since morning, when Peter cooked his own bacon and coffee. At noon it had been cold; she had seen it; Peter had started then for town. . . . Unless he had come back.

The sun had almost gone down; it was dark in the hall. She threw open the doors, and started frantically tugging at Miss' Mary's chiffonier and washstand. The men arrived, coatless, willing. They piled furniture around the big cedar north of the house. The heat of this burning wing became blistering; the things had to be moved down the road.

Diana remembered the telephoning.

"We got an alarm," a gruff voice scolded. "Engines ought to be there now."

Two neighbors from the base of the mountain came up, and began helping. Armed guards at the entrances to the estate kept many away; these watched the holocaust from beyond the gap, or from their own homes. Dried wooden walls flamed up against the dark sky like giant fireworks; massed smoke bellied and spit sparks as if the mountain vomited in fiery discomfort.

Someone led a group of helpers up to the dim door of the garret, crowded with carefully covered family treasures from Jackson days. The dusty packing-cases

promised little. "Nothing here," he said, closing the door.

The north end was an oven now; the rescuers turned to the dining room, parlors, and the boys' rooms on the south.

Diana ran back to the closet where Miss' Mary's silver was locked. She left this to hurry to the window, and then the door.

Huggins, Jim Hewin, and a knot of guards stared at the hectic activity. "Hey, niggers," one called to Will Cole and another, who were steering the hall clock from the Jackson home through the door, "drop that clock. You can't steal Mr. Judson's things."

Will and the other reached the porch.

"Drop it, I say," rang out Jim's ugly voice, as he balanced his pistol tentatively. "You bastards, burnin' down the house, to steal the stuff!"

"That's a lie," Will called, shortly Others took up the cry.

The guards raised menacing pistols.

A striker, his temper on fire from continuing irritations, dropped behind the nearest steps, levelled his pistol, and shot toward the armed group.

Diana ran out flying, shielding Will. "Don't shoot my brother, you scoundrels——"

Jim's pistol, carefully aimed at the black striker, crackled viciously. Tongues of flame spoke from the armed deputies.

"You plugged the gal," Huggins grinned casually, aiming again. "We got both coons."

The astounded citizens ran between the sudden murderous combatants. "This won't do!"

"The house is burning, while you're killing each other!"

The chemical engine swung around the southern curve

of the road, jetting ineffectually against the greedy insanity of the flames. The strikers took up the four bodies, and carried them somberly to Hewintown, Stella Cole following, dry-eyed and shivering with uncomprehending hatred.

Pelham and Jane walked among the smouldering ruins the next day, their hearts bitter at the headlines which blamed the strikers for the burning. "There's no dirtiness they won't stoop to," he raged. "Hanging's too good for those editors."

When Paul Judson arrived, to what had been home, in answer to Mr. Kane's wire, it was to find that Tom Hewin, whose sub-contract still controlled this part of the estate, had begun removing the rich outcrop where the north end of the cottage had rested.

"This is outrageous, Hewin! We don't want this touched——"

"It's the contract, Mr. Judson. In section seven. I supposed——"

Paul left him, agonized at heart.

An injunction the next day stopped the theft of the outcrop, and removed the Hewins from their connection with the property and the strike.

Only Ed was left to his mother to arrange for the burial of Diana and Will. Neither of them knew, although Stella suspected, that there were three dead in the two graves.

XIX

LIFE at the Hernandez home had its definite compensations, Pelham found. A nearby garage held the indispensable car; and there was now no one to censor his comings and goings. As long as he slept on the mountain, Mary clung to this rôle; the relief of the lifted restraint was immediate.

His mining inspector's badge gave him the run of the mountain property, although he was careful not to use it in direct union propaganda.

One afternoon late in August, Jim Hewin came up to him on a downtown avenue. "Howdy, Mr. Judson. Say," and the shifty eyes nervously agitated toward Pelham's face, "I could do you a good turn if I wanted to."

"What's that?"

"I got some dope you'd give a heap to know."

The other regarded him with suspicion. "What about, Hewin?"

"I know what the company's got up its sleeve. I can put you wise, all right. What's in it for me?" He waited, expectant.

Pelham choked down his disgust. "Not a cent. If you'd sell out my father, you'd sell us out as quickly." He walked off in impotent anger against the go-betweens seeking to fatten on the bitter struggle.

The local mining board assigned Pelham to the property he was most familiar with: either for that reason, or through a grim irony. As mining inspector, he secured access to all the books of the company. This gave him needed statistics for his report on the strike situa-

tion, and kept him busy, and, against his will, away from Jane, and the solace and spur of the hours with her.

The problem began to shape itself more clearly, now that he had become to a greater extent weaned from mountain and family. The whole opposition to the miners' demands was summed up and centered, in his mind, in that dominant personality of Paul Judson. Similarly he felt that he embodied the opposing forces. Without his presence, his thinking told him, the strike would have come just the same; but he knew that his cordial efforts had stiffened the fight of the workers more than they imagined.

It was a stake worth fighting for, that vast prone bulk overshadowing Adamsville, rich with the congealed essence of the ages. His father fought for himself, and for the group of spoilers who sought to bleed it for their selfish sakes. The son's cause was the cause of the people—of the toiling, inarticulate herd fettered by ignorance and immemorial adjustment to serfdom. Democracy against oppression—it was the real fight which the Adamsville press short-sightedly claimed was being waged over sea and sky and land against the war-mad encroachment of autocracy. The warring causes abroad were cloudy; the local situation was clear. So he told himself; and the parallel spoke strongly in his stirring speeches to the patient union fighters.

A new masterfulness radiated in his utterances. As a servant of the State, as well as a contender for the people, he was close to the tangled heart of the intricate struggle. He felt surer of himself than ever.

The mood of restrained audacity found itself cabined and confined in the irritation of mining statistics. The card for the University Club summer dance came opportunely; he went, too, through a perverse joy in embarrassing the good people of Adamsville by his discon-

certing presence, and in studying their varied reactions to his new rôle.

He joined the group in the grill, a little diffident as to his reception. Lane Cullom, unchanging adherent of old, caught him by both hands. "You darned stranger! What'll it be?"

Lane led him and Hallock Withers, a clubman Pelham knew casually, to one of the cosy benched tables. "Never forget that you're in the presence of His Honor the State Mining Inspector, Hal. He's a nut in politics, but he can play tennis."

"Haven't lifted a racket in four months."

The friend laid an affectionate hand on Pelham's flannels. "I brought a girl you've just got to meet, Pell! She's from New Orleans, and she is some trotter! Visiting the Tollivers——"

Pelham grimaced.

"Nothing like Nellie, don't worry! Her name is Louise Ree-sharr——"

"What in the world!"

Lane grunted defensively. "Something like that. Old New Orleans family, and all the rest——"

The prospect did not attract; but the girl did. She had an opulent fulness that stopped distinctly short of being plump. Her large eyes reminded him at once of Jane's, and then of his mother's; but there was an artistry about their seeming candor that seduced his fancy. The burst of red roses at her waist did not outshine the glow of her complexion; vivid dark brown hair sparkled with brilliants set in a quaint tortoise shell comb. Each of the unimportant details assumed significance as contributing to the totality of full-blown charm.

She laid a proprietary arm in his, as they passed through the rainbow glimmer of Oriental lanterns swaying between the lawn trees. "Is Adamsville always as

deadly as this? New Orleans is bad enough—but this!"

His throaty chuckle answered her. "I assure you I don't know."

"You live here?"

"I'm not a clubman. Life's too busy."

"Sounds imposing. What do you do, besides dance and use those serious eyes?"

"That's all my regular vocation. At off times I play tennis, wave my hair in the breeze, and inspect mines."

"It's nice hair." She regarded it thoughtfully.

"You can pull it."

With amused tolerance she smoothed it, then yanked it suddenly.

"Ouch! I treasure that."

An egotistic restlessness urged him. He thought once or twice of Jane, as he monopolized this girl. By an emotional vagary he connected the other with the clipped and forbidden rigors of the mountain life, which he had divorced finally.

"How about dinner at the club to-morrow night, and the dance afterwards? Or a ride?"

"But I'm to go out to the James', at Meadow Valley. Are you going?"

"Ethel James'? . . . I haven't been asked."

"Would they include you? Could I suggest it? It's an informal affair. It'll break up early."

"I think it will be all right. She's here to-night. . . . We could have dinner first."

He found an infrequent sparkle in her conversation, a pretty froth of talk that pleased. But it was not for this that he sought her out. The urge to wander that the mountain had sown in his blood impelled him most of all. He felt his imagination inflamed by the stimulus of her presence, the vivid challenge of her eyes, the audacious invitation of her lips. He had met no woman

hitherto who so invited love-making. She seemed a rounded vessel brimfull of soft airs and caressing modulations of speech, that promised more than the bare words warranted.

On the return from the James' country home, they shot ahead of the other cars, purring in poised flight down the smooth macadam of the county road. He turned off into the upward slope above Hazelton that led to the mountain; he regarded himself as its privileged showman. In front of the drowsy trimness of farm houses they pulsed, until at last he stopped the engine where the road rounded over a steep outcrop dropping a jagged hundred feet to the steep tree-y declivity below.

"There's a bench. It's a wonderful view," he said, his speech thickened—the old timidity at the moment when passion possessed him again struggling against his desire.

She took the seat he indicated. The cool whip of the breeze sprayed him with the faint suggestion of *lilas* that hung about her person. He tried to pull his senses from her overwhelming fascination.

"Isn't it wonderful?"

She nodded, lips apart, eyes starry. Discarding his shield of constraint, he turned swiftly on her, catching the filmy fabric covering her arms and bringing her face toward him.

Her voice was level, conventional. "You mustn't." She tried to squirm away.

"Yes!" He whispered his urgent triumph.

His lips avid from long self-denial, he blent with the wild sweetness of hers. She remained quiescent a moment, then sought to free herself. He clung to her, as if his life depended on retaining the warm rapture of her kiss. She thought he would never end.

At last she pulled away, a trifle dazed with the force of his passion. His lips fell lower, kissing her shoulder,

her arm, the hand squeezing the taut ball of her handkerchief. As she took even this from him, he fell to his knees beside her, pressing long kisses on the handkerchief, any symbol to satisfy the aching hunger of his body.

She watched him in wonder. Her hand faltered out and pressed back the damp hair from his forehead. "You poor boy! You poor, starved boy!"

The paroxysm over, he sat at her feet, moodily watching the lower reaches of the valley. He realized the breach of faith with Jane; but there was a perverse part of him that rejoiced at the duplicity. The other love was chaste, beside this; after all, he could love more than one woman. . . . Should he stop with one wrenched rose, when the bush was on fire with red beauty?

Again he sat beside her. "You know, Louise," he urged tentatively, enough withdrawn from the scene to study her reaction to his conduct, "I've been straight with women. . . . You are the only girl I have kissed in a year."

It trembled on her tongue to say that he had made up for lost time; no, that would sound too flippant. "I know, I know," her answer rang rich with soft understanding.

It was the next night that she reverted to the matter, the fluent voluptuousness of her body still tingling from the harsh tenderness of his arms. "You're a funny boy. . . . What you said last night. . . ."

"I said so much!"

Her thought could not be laughed away. "About your keeping straight, you know. . . . I have a friend—she only married last Mardi Gras—who always insisted she wanted a man who had had experience. . . . Girls have queer notions, haven't they?"

"I should think the girl would feel soiled . . . that

way. I should hate to have my mind filled, on my wedding night, comparing the wonderful girl I had won . . . with . . . other women I had had."

The perverse infidelity shook him again. "And yet I kiss." He turned the word into fact.

"There's no logic in it," he persisted, his body eased with the lip-contact. "Kissing shouldn't be wasted, any more than the rest. It's only a prelude to the more wonderful finale. . . ."

"I enjoy the prelude," she temporized, in lazy content.

"And afterwards——" he breathed on his hand pausing fearfully on the tantalizing silken softness of her cool ankle, then straying with restrained gusto toward the edge of the lacy fabric above.

"No," she smiled. He solaced an obedient spirit with the touch of the denying lips.

The next afternoon he never forgot. They started early for Shadow Mountain, promising the Tollivers to return with mountain azalea, if it was still blooming. She dismissed this as an excuse.

Over the iron bridge curving above Shadow Creek's muddy bluster they hummed, and then up the hill. They left the car in the shade of a sandy lane, and clambered up the steep intricacies of sandstone, to a wide table-rock slipped from the hoary buttresses above. Beyond this were the azaleas.

The sun-splashed slope was a dizzy riot of the rosy blossoms. A fringe of the stocky shrubs curved over the jutting shelf of the rock, burning with timid pink blossoms at the crest of their blooming. A few of the individual flowers had passed maturity, and hung in the woodland wind, perilously pendent from the long pistils. Louise, rejoicing in the soft gray-green of her smock, lifted a big spray of the scented beauties and nested her face in them. A brown shimmer of hair caught on a

nervy twig: Pelham undid it with unnecessary deliberation, and took pay for his chivalry.

They turned to the flowers. Uneven ripples of color spread from the gray rock's knees toward the blue crest horizon, a fragrant carpeting of pink and white and every modulation down to a deep ruby. To the right a veritable tree of speckled petals, frilled and dancing on airy feet in the sun-drizzle. A curveting breeze blew up a spray of flowery snow, dusting their footing. The farther blossoms seemed, by some trick of vision, a flowery fabric clinging veil-like above the gay green beneath. It was a restless pool of glowing color and odor.

From bush to bush they zigzagged, until her face was bowered in the bright sprays, and his fingers weary with whittling their stems. He took them from her, left her on the rock, and piled the flowers over the rear seat.

As he returned, his eyes rose restfully from her blossomed opulence to the lake of blooms. "There seem to be more here than before! They grow faster than we pick."

She made room for him beside her. Her head found a soft pillow in his coat; lazily she stretched her body on the natural couch of lichened firmness.

His lips burned greedily against the soft flush of her neck. He let his torch-like body rest half upon hers, for a long silence of tantalizing rapture. At length, repentant at the thought of Jane, he swung to a seat beside the other girl. In a moment he was conscious only of her, proud with an inner satisfaction in the man's rôle he was sure he was playing; more strongly than either of these feelings, afraid—afraid of himself, afraid lest the urgent emotions writhing within him would drive control from him, and force him into a situation which would be, no matter its outcome, unsettling, disquieting. . . .

Man's innate tendency to mate as freely as the vast mountain oaks, shaking their pollen broadcast on every breath of breeze, was in him; but this had been tamed and sublimated, by his mother's overfond molding, by her pricking desire to keep him hers and no other woman's as long as possible, into an ingrowing chastity, a morbidly re-fondled rejection of sex, except for the arm's-length wooing of Jane. But the very opulence of his flowering mountain spoke against this, urged an abandon to the fierce ecstasies of yielding and taking. The warring wills found a sanguine battle-ground within him. There was a throbbing zest in tantalizing himself, by postponing the inevitable necessity of some choice. He must think it out carefully; he could wait. . .

Shaking her skirts free of littering twigs, she rose. He was a puzzle. She steadied herself by his arm. "I like it here," she summed up softly.

The wild azalea filled the glassed sunroom of the Tollivers with a faint echo of the glory of the distant mountain.

XX

"WHAT do you think of *that,* comrade Judson?" Mrs. Hernandez asked, pushing the morning paper over, and watching his expression closely.

The first sheet of the *Times-Dispatch* held a page-wide display headline, concerning a dynamiting conspiracy unearthed among the leaders of the strike. With furious amazement Pelham read of the finding of a bundle of the explosive sticks on the tracks just before a trainload of workers was to arrive, and of a heavy charge, its fuse lit, in an upper opening of the second ramp. Company guards, he read, had testified to seeing four strikers sneak down the gap, away from the entry. Wilson, Jensen, and two other active agitators were already in jail; other arrests were to follow. A two column editorial bitterly assailed the "un-American" laborers, and demanded the militia to end the reign of terror.

"It's a plant, I'm sure. They're aching for an excuse to bring on the soldiers."

"They got four of the boys," she reminded him.

"It's outrageous."

He hurried around to the strike headquarters. Ben Spence, Dawson, McGue, and four others broke off their tense discussion as he entered.

"Why didn't you phone me about this?"

Spence answered, his tone not too friendly. "Couldn't find you."

"We haven't seen you for a week, Mr. Judson," blared

out Dawson. "We been readin' the social news, too. You've been busy."

"Yes. . . . I've been busy on my report." A flash of his father's acidity spoke in the tones. Then he asked more quietly, "What about bonds?"

"You can help there," Spence mollified him. "We've got most of 'em arranged for. When will your report go up?"

Pelham twisted forward on his chair. "It'll contain this latest plant. I'll finish this week. I suspected something of the kind." He told them of the offer made by Jim Hewin.

"It's an old stunt," said Dawson, unbending a little from his suspicion of "white-collar" meddling in labor troubles. "They ought to be ashamed to pull such stale gags. But here in the South—— Those blackguardly uglies will swear any of us into jail."

"There's the jury," said Spence, a fighting flash in his eyes. "We can play a trick or two. Corporations ain't popular in Adamsville. Well, we'll get the boys out first."

The whole thing brought Pelham up sharply to his neglected work. He got one more maddeningly brief sight of Louise, before she continued her round of visits. "I'll be back, lover boy, around the holidays."

"How can I stand your being away?"

But the Tollivers were too close to permit his saying more.

Nursing his unsettling sense of guilt, until he was sure his face must publish the amorous errancy, he took himself to Jane on the accustomed Friday evening. She had not marked his absences, accepting the explanation that the report had kept him busied. To his wonderment, she was as dear and essentially desirable as ever; her range of attractiveness lay in ways so remote from

Louise's red and feverish charm, that he sensed no conflict between them; he could love both wholly for their differing appeals.

Yet the evening was different, to him. The memory of intimate contacts with the brief love who had gone left a mental stigma upon his body; he was less willing than ever to touch Jane, or think of kissing her; she must be kept all the more congealed in icy protection. As defense against unnerving personal confidences, he had brought his report, which had begun to trouble him, to ask her help and counsel. "I'm afraid of it, Jane. You see, it goes all the way . . . about my own father. It'll be bound to make trouble for him . . . and me. I could have another inspector frame the final wording——"

"You back out! You must be a changeling some corporation elf has dumped off on me!"

"Don't tease. The thing bites too hard; it has nothing but teeth."

"Of course you'll make it! Give it here; we'll fix it so that it can masticate the toughest corporation board. What if it does make trouble? It's the truth. . . ."

She went over the whole of it, toning down the vituperative rhetoric of the opening and conclusion, adding force to his presentation of facts. He was startled at her ability to vivify the abstractions symbolizing the red rage tearing apart city and mountain. Before she was done, he was re-converted to faith in his eloquent accusations.

At length it was finished. He saw that advance copies reached the papers on the day it was received by the governor. The *Advertiser* and the *Times-Dispatch* did not even mention it. But the ever-helpful *Register* more than made up for their censoring. The slashing indictment of the companies for their disregard of the protective laws, the startling story of their lobbies to defeat

safety measures, even the account of his father's activity at the State Federation of Labor, with the advertisements in the *Voice of Labor* as exhibits, were given in full. This was a new frankness in Adamsville politics. From this Pelham passed to a treatment of starvation wages on the one hand, and prodigal salaries, surpluses and dividends on the other. He featured that the strike was for the enforcement of existing laws, and that the companies refused any arbitration. The conclusion recommended that the state enforce arbitration, or, if the companies could not be controlled, that the profiteering be ended by the state's taking over the mines and running them.

The lonely editorial voice of the *Register* backed up even the most radical demands of the document.

The answer of the companies came promptly. Both of the other papers broke silence by denouncing the report as dishonest propaganda, with a demand for the removal of the offending young hothead. They called again for the militia to end the disorder at the mines.

Pelham received a wire from Governor Tennant the same night, suspending him from the state's services under charges of misconduct in office. The two hostile papers gave the details, the next morning; his strike activities were set forth, and given as reasons for his dismissal.

"You'll get your hearing," Ben Spence told him, "but that'll be all. It's goodbye with you, my boy. And you've drawn just two pay checks!"

His father descended on him in proxy during the afternoon, in the person of Pratt Judson, who had run up from Jackson, at Paul's suggestion, after interviewing the governor, to act as intermediary. Pelham listened with ill grace to his uncle's suave attempts to cloud the matter.

"Bob Tennant is a friend of yours, as well as mine, Pelham. It would certainly hurt him to remove you; but what is he to do?"

"Does my father demand the removal?"

"You know better. He stood up for you, even against the whole board of directors. Family means a lot to Paul. But they're out for your scalp. You've played yourself into their hands."

"I don't see how," the boy repeated doggedly, curving a steel-edged ruler until it cracked alarmingly. "I don't see how."

"If you'd gotten anyone's advice, my boy, you would know that a state official can't take sides in such matters. You've actually served on the strike committees, haven't you?"

"Heretofore inspectors haven't failed to serve the companies. They weren't fired."

"Let's not beat around the bush. Here's the best that Tennant can do. The charges need never come up, if you don't kick up another row. The suspension can go for the present, and then in due course you can resign. Mary tells me you've wanted to take up advanced work in sociology. You know I'm not a rich man, Pelham; but I'll be willing, to pull you out of this hole, to stand the whole expense."

"Would you advise me to retreat under fire? Resign, with charges hanging over me?"

The portly uncle thought a minute. "They'll be withdrawn now, Pelham, if you'll agree to resign in six months, and take a vacation until then. There'll be nothing against you."

The ruler splintered abruptly, littering the ordered desk. "It's running away from a fight, Uncle Pratt, and you know it. I can't do it."

"Think of the family—a black mark like this——"

"I'm thinking of the miners . . . of my duty to them and the people."

"We're practical men, Pelham. You know enough about politics to know that you're butting your head against a stone mountain."

"Then I'll butt, damn 'em! Talk straight, Uncle Pratt. Would you advise me to back out of a fight in the middle of it?"

The elder man grinned in defeated sympathy. "You're a young fool, Pelham. We've got to do this quickly, or it's too late. I could give you until to-morrow to think it over——"

"I don't need the time. This is the only answer I could make."

"Well, I'll tell Paul. If you ever get into a scrape of any kind——"

"I appreciate that, and I'll remember it."

The strike committee heard what had occurred within an hour, as far as Pelham's decision was concerned.

"Good boy!" said Spence. "Give 'em a run for their dirty money."

Serrano, an unofficial member of the group, broke in excitedly. "Why not run Judson as labor candidate for sheriff, and elect him? That's the best answer to make to the crooks! You'd run, wouldn't you?"

Pelham thought rapidly. It would at least give a wonderful chance for propaganda, even if they couldn't overcome the big odds against them. "I don't think we could win——"

"Win? We'd lick the lights out of 'em! Man, Adamsville's waking up! With the strike going on, you could beat out Dick Sumter hands down! Look how he's turned the sheriff's office over to the companies! Will you do it?"

There might be something in it; his heart expanded

sharply from the excitement. He kept his voice level. "I'd be willing to, of course. What do you think of it, Ben?"

The cautious labor lawyer was not so enthusiastic. "You might do it, Judson. You'd have to have union labor entirely behind you——"

"We can make 'em endorse him!"

"Socialist and all?" quizzed Spence, smiling doubtfully.

"Sure! Think what it would mean to the strike, if we had the sheriff's office! We could enforce order then. . . . They'd have no chance to call out their brass-buttoned Willies."

"Well, it's a big chance."

The hearing at Jackson, the next week, was the cut-and-dried farce that Pratt Judson and Spence had predicted. The governor was friendly but firm. "It's my duty, Mr. Judson, as a servant of all the people, to remove you."

Jane, on fire with the idea of the campaign, caught his hand impulsively when he hurried back to tell her. "Don't mind it. We knew what they would do. . . . Now—show them!"

The thing moved slowly. There were countless obstacles. Pooley, Bowden, the regular machine, would not hear of it. An uproarious meeting of the Trade Council shoved through an endorsement. The leaders changed their talk then, but Pelham felt their hidden antipathy working against him. So far there had been no open announcement of the race, and it was now the last week of August.

"Ben Spence, you've got to put this thing over. Hire Arlington Hall—the socialist local will put up the money —and start it next Sunday afternoon."

"Hadn't we better wait until things are straightened out a bit——"

"We'll wait until election's over, then. We've waited three weeks now."

"All right. Dawson says he'll back you; he's worth a lot."

Then began first-hand knowledge of the detail of politics for Pelham. Even before the announcement meeting, the socialist local, in its haphazard groping for democracy, selected a committee to steer the campaign. They met in Pelham's office the next night.

Pelham mused over their faces, as they blundered down to business. Surely the most extraordinary group ever assembled to direct the political destinies of Adamsville! Serrano, a bricklayer, a loud voiced, commanding bulk of a man, who banged with the improvised gavel; Christopher Duckworth, pioneer in the Adamsville movement, an impecunious old architect who had had his name on the state ticket at every election for sixteen years; two machinists, fighting units of a fighting group, "Mule" Hinton and Henry Gup; the party's state secretary, Mrs. Ola Spigner, who had come up from her farm in Choctaw County, ever on hand for a fight; Phifer Craft, a failure as a commission merchant, and a deep theoretical student of Marx and Dietzgen; Abe Katz, spokesman of the tailors' union and the Arbeiter Ring; and his landlady, Mrs. Hernandez, invariable woman member on committees. They were not even leaders in their trades, except Serrano and perhaps Katz. Most were poor speakers or spoke not at all. But out of the ill-lit slums and lean cheap suburbs they had been flung together by a burning idealism for a greater world. They were the hands of a people's groping faith.

"I mofe we elect us a treasurer," said Abe Katz seriously. So began the business of the campaign.

Dawson, Ben Spence, even Bowden and the Bivens group dropped in at occasional meetings; but this faithful nucleus was always on hand, doing the real work. They mapped out the itinerary of speakers, got out the first literature, sent soliciting committees to the various unions for endorsement and funds, in fact directed the whole campaign.

Any of the comrades were willing to be broken in as chairmen of the meetings. The speaking at first fell heavily on Serrano, Duckworth, and Pelham himself; but gradually the liberal element of the city came into the fight. Dr. Gulley threw the support of his Free Congregation into the contest with the "County Ring," as represented by Sumter; near-radical lawyers, Will Tatum, Judge Deason, Harvey Cade, eager to oust the corporation toadies, were invaluable assistants; Lane Cullom's car was always at the call of the committee, and shared with Pelham's the duty of touring the rambling county roads to the further meetings.

The unique campaign drew crowds from the start. One night Pelham called for a show of hands of all the men present who were voters; the result was so astonishing, that he repeated the lesson again and again. In West Adamsville, filled with itinerant furnace workers, not one man in fifteen was a voter. In the country districts, about one in ten; in the city, slightly less. With the aid of Ben Spence, he looked up the question, and thereafter added a vigorous attack on the election laws to his onslaughts on the company-owned sheriff's office.

"Do you know what your servants down in Jackson did in 1902, when they framed the new Constitution? They told you it would take the vote from 'the niggers'; it took the vote from you white men as well. In New

York, in Illinois, in most of the northern and eastern states, from eighteen to twenty-two per cent of the population vote; in Western suffrage states, up to thirty-five per cent. And in the South? Georgia has something like five per cent, this state four, and Mississippi only three and a half per cent! Half of the men in this state are white; six out of every ten of these have been disfranchised by that Constitution. The cumulative poll tax, which says you can't vote unless every poll tax since 1902 has been paid by the February before the election, the grandfather clause, giving votes to the southern slave-masters and not to the southern wage-slaves who make the state's wealth now, these have robbed you of your voice in the government. The southern laborer has been classed with children, women, negroes, and idiots—will you stand for it?"

The campaign, thanks to the *Register's* hearty support, began to alarm the politicians. Pat Donohoo, who controlled five saloons, and claimed to be able to deliver the Irish and Catholic vote, came in to see Pelham. "We know your father," he confided huskily. "Give me your word that you'll behave when you're elected, and I'll see that you get every Catholic and Irish vote in the county. We're out to teach Dick Sumter a lesson."

Pelham answered briskly. "Of course I'll behave. My platform says what I'll do, Donohoo. If your men want to vote for me, go to it. They'll get a square deal from me, I'll promise that."

"You see," he explained to the committee, "he's playing safe. No matter who's elected, he can claim the credit."

"Never trust them Catholics," said Mrs. Spigner, a devout propagandist for the *Menace*. "They're all Jesuits."

"He couldn't deliver anyhow," consoled Ben Spence.

The crafty lawyer made the labor support fairly solid, by promising liberal appointments to the State Federation crowd. Pelham did not know about this, and Spence did not imagine that the promises would have to be fulfilled.

For one of the meetings the candidate worked harder than usual. It had been old Duckworth's suggestion that a speaking be advertised for the corner across from the University Club, in the very heart of the "silk-stocking" district. The neighborhood was liberally posted, and the committee were on hand to cover the retreat of the speakers, if too much of a riot developed. To their surprise, the large crowd listened to Dr. Gulley's fervent appeals, to the withering sarcasm of Harvey Cade, and to Judson's vitriolic attack on the leisure class, with close and appreciative attention. One or two of the East Highlands boys hooted a few times, but a policeman routed them. The applause was as hearty here as at Hazelton or Irondale.

Pelham's opponent stirred himself tardily, and was careful not to answer the accurate broadside of charges flung at him by the deposed mining inspector. General attacks on socialism were much more popular than lame apologies for an unfair and one-sided administration; and the common charge that American socialism was pro-German was roared and ballyhooed by the political servants of the corporations, upon platforms opulently framed in bunting. Pelham laughed at this intense patriotism, suddenly discovered as an answer to the sheriff's anti-labor activities; but it made continual inroads upon his strength with the docile people. The tide wavered to and fro; the *Register* claimed four days before election that Judson's chances were better than even; the alarmed opposing sheets insisted that there was only one man in the race, and that the iron city would never toler-

ate a man who openly advocated free love, kaiserism, and the despotism of the mob.

The closing rally of the Democrats came on Saturday night, an old-fashioned whooping wind-up in the Lyric theater; Pelham covered five county meetings and two city ones during the same time. Monday night, while the opposing forces rested their public activities, occurred the Judson finale, at Main Park, in the rickety summer band-stand. The trampled green in the open heart of the city was black with intent and serious faces, whose throats cheered themselves hoarse over the hoarsened voice of their leader,—though his tones, roughened by night after night of straining open-air talking, could barely reach half of his crowd.

The final applause was given; the reporters rushed off with their copy; the squads of comrades and union men left with their wives and children for cheap scattered homes. Pelham took Jane back to the Andersons', to sit, glum and wholly exhausted, slumped against the back of the couch, until after two.

"Never mind, you dear old fighter," she insisted. "You've done more than anyone else could."

Tuesday, election day, was a hectic tumult of excitement for both sides. Lane Cullom insisted on driving Pelham in his car, proud of the reflected light that went to the faithful aid of the candidate. The relief of shooting along chill stretches of November road from polling-place to polling-place was indescribable.

At five the polls closed. Pelham, after a lunch-stand supper, sat in his half-dismantled headquarters, his finger upon the pulse of the wires that led to every part of the county.

The returns began. One by one the faithful precincts lifted Judson to a good lead, and increased it. Hazelton, West Adamsville, distant Coalstock, the mining

boxes, all went well, more than neutralizing the early farming returns, which were four to one for Sumter. And then the totals grew evener, and wavered now one way, now another. The vocal vote was Judson's; the silent, unchangeable Democratic mass began to lend its weight to the incumbent. There was still a fighting chance. Counting at the city boxes proceeded with sickening slowness.

The last of the county returns was wired from distant Chinaberry Junction: Judson led by fifty-two votes! If the city had broken even, he would have it!

The jubilant comrades and strikers conscripted sudden parades of celebration; the corporations were licked! It would paralyze the companies to have the law-enforcers, their oldtime bulwark, turned against them!

Then, as if at the touch of a single lever, the thirteen big city boxes unloosed their flood of figures. First ward, Sumter, a hundred lead; eleventh, Sumter three hundred ahead; ninth, Sumter, two hundred more; fifth, eight hundred and eighty to the good for Sumter—this was the Highlands ward; not one lone box tallying for Judson. Within twenty minutes, enough of the returns were in to convince Pelham that the citizens of Bragg County had spoken in their freeborn majesty, and had chosen Richard Sumter sheriff by a majority of almost two to one.

The morning papers gave the corrected figures—8,450 to 4,281. The corporations still held the court house.

"It's really a victory," Mrs. Spigner, the state secretary, repeated with cheerless optimism, as Pelham drove her to the early mail train for Choctaw County. "You raised a socialist vote of six hundred something like six hundred per cent. You impatient youngsters, who think one election has any importance! Remember, comrade, it's all a part of the class struggle!"

At the end of a day of fatiguing post mortems and loquacious consolations, of noisy assurances that he had won, punctuating his dismemberment of the decapitated headquarters, he sought his real inspiriter, Jane. The city lay under a shimmer of thin November sunshine, that woke to dusky gold the tawny leaves flickering, at the chilly breeze's lash, upon motionless black boughs—that revealed pitilessly the feathery plumes of golden rod reaching over the sidewalk from the vacant lot beyond Andersons', plumes the season's slow alchemy had transmuted to insubstantial silver fragility, sifting into the reddish mold at the fingering of the spurts of ground wind. Pelham would have preferred a drizzling, cloud-heavy night sky, in which the decrepit cheerfulness of the late landscape, and he himself, could have been decently shrouded in isolating obscurity.

Jane gave him both her hands as he mounted the last step, reading, in the drawn corners of his mouth, and the heaviness beneath his eyes, the half-raised signals of surrender.

There was a flavor of bitterness in his first words. "It was really a victory, after all——"

"You've heard that enough to-day, I know. Don't try to talk: here, these cushions——" slipping them easily under his head, as a firm hand upon his shoulder soothed his protest. "Let yourself relax, all over. There."

Her eyes meditated between one of the chairs and the end of the couch beside him. She sat upon the couch.

The drowsy stillness, the moment's remoteness from the iron affairs of the racking city, the soft rustle of her dress, the gentle eddies of air that seemed scented by her presence, lulled and comforted. He reached for her hand, and laid it against his cheek, where it loitered, a cool solace, a gradual masterer of his undirected fancies.

The hours sagged by. There was little talk; that could wait. Not of his willing his mind began to embroider the miserly store of caresses he had asked or received from Jane; one by one the feverish moments with the other girl, purged into a less bodily ecstasy, recurred to him, with his own love's face and form holding their rightful place in his arms—translated memories which in their turn were embellished by a drugged imagination into warmer visionings of mutual surrender. Attempts to re-channel his thinking were unsuccessful; at last he let the wanton heart have its way.

Never had he needed a mother as now, Jane felt, as she bent her energy toward his tired spirit. He needed more than a mother; his feverish driving unrest would quiet, in arms that held him closer than a mother's might. The time had come for her to be mother to him, and something else. Winner or not, he was a hearty fighter . . . decent. . . . Jane Lauderdale Judson . . . the name meant something now; she had helped it mean something. A tired boy; her tired boy. . . .

He looked up into her face at last. Her eyes, radiant with unspoken caresses, were a madonna's . . . twin stars over a fretted sea; twin stars, in a heaven so near that he could reach and touch it. Unsteadied, he swung painfully to a seat beside her. Then, compelled by her dominant eyes, he turned and faced her in the shadowy hush. Unsteadily he put out his two arms, touching her lightly, fearfully, upon the shoulders, and lingering there. The pressure of his fingers drew her toward him; a pressure from no visible fingers pushed him inexorably toward her. He felt her breast touch him softly, and settle contentedly against him. He pressed his flushed face against the soft neck and the tendrils of her hair; his lips lay against her flesh, although he did not dare move them.

There was an unhurried rapture of stirless content. Half solaced for the moment, he released her; but his eyes could not leave hers, nor his face move far from her own.

Her clear voice came to him quietly, with the mellow reverberations of a gong touched in dusky stillness. "Stupid. . . ." He could not read the half-closed eyes; he had to lean closer to make out the words. "Is that all. . . .? Must I ask you. . . .?"

His lips touched hers, closed upon them, clung there. A giddy faintness came with the long-withheld ardor; his eyes shut out sight, the other senses ceased for the moment—the frantic remnant of his will and consciousness seeking to make the moment perpetual. His own being seemed to flow out and into the other, he seemed to absorb from the vital contact all of the inestimable dearness that she meant to him. This consummation, devoutly unwished for so long, was for that reason in its realization doubly dear; it brought an ecstasy so brimming that for the time no other sensation found space to obtrude.

Too soon, to his heart, the ecstatic eternity ended. Suddenly ashamed of her daring in permitting the tardy rapture, not to think of inviting it, Jane drew back, releasing her tingling lips into a prim pucker of uncertainty. He sought her a second time, quickened to an arrogant sense of ownership of intangible wonders. Her protest reached him: "We shouldn't, Pelham dear. . . ."

She found her lips too busied to frame more negative commandments, despite her unevenly ebbing struggles of protest.

At length his sense of protection returned; dizzily he leaned back, unstrung, and yet satisfied. The night noises pulsed a rhythm fuller, more harmoniously triumphant with soft surges of loving certainty, than he had

ever felt; the pandering darkness was intimate and confidential. With the slowing of the unleashed leap of his blood, recollections of Louise Richard came, as he had once feared; but there was no conflict, no sense of soilure, in the unreal, remote fantasy of the former passion; only a sun-high glory and delight in this, as if the first had been the needed soil in which the plant of love could grow toward fulfillment.

Her ears caught his contented whisper. "What are a thousand defeats, Jane . . . loved one . . . when there is this at the end of the way?"

"At the beginning of our new way," she amended with sober joy.

"It wipes out all the irks and littlenesses. . . . Under all our veneer and varnish of culture, business, politics, we are man and woman . . . male and female . . . our souls as nakedly desirous as were the first two who mated. . . . Loved one!" It rendered him inarticulate, this delicious stirring up of the hidden deeps. It was for this, he was sure, that men and women had been molded; in this surrender they yielded themselves to the ageless currents of joy-bringing unity that created life, and continued it as life itself.

"I love your hair," she arranged it more to her liking. "It fretted your eyes, that last speech. . . . I wanted to kiss it away . . . then."

XXI

THREE weeks after the election, the cold set in. As if to compensate for the maddening torridity of July and August, the biting tail of a snowstorm lashed bleakly over Adamsville. The white flakes danced wildly along the exposed crest of the mountain, stinging summer-seasoned skins. Blasts whistled and shrieked, piling the chill drifts along the rutty streets of Hewintown, sifting through sacks roofing the gaps in the shack shingles.

Then a day of thaw, deepening the roads into a cold slushiness; and that night a downburst of rain and hail, that cased trees, shrubs, hill-paths in a glittering coating of ice. The brittle walks cut into feet whose shoes lacked soling, the slippery steeps flung weakened women and men against pointed rocks, adding to the already overworked Charities the chill cruelties of winter.

"Where's your overcoat, Ben, in this weather?" Pelham asked Wilson, now out on bail, as they passed on the stiffened sidewalks.

"Ain't got none, Mr. Judson. An' the wife's down with the T. B., an' no blankets in the house."

"I've got an extra coat; come on in to the office. . . . I'll phone Miss Lauderdale about your people before we go to town."

"There's hundreds like us; you know charity can't stretch very far. What these boys need is justice."

Pelham marveled at the untaught vision that could broaden its individual suffering into universal understanding.

Wilson had not exaggerated the matter. The white plague gained on undernourished men, their lungs rotted with underground damp and dust; on anemic wives and mothers; on starved shadows of children and feebly crying babies.

Each death piled higher their sullen hatred of the company. The overcoated deputies boasted of their huge feeding, and treated with growing insolence the wives and daughters of the men. Powder was being laid for another explosion, in spite of Dawson's frantic efforts to keep the strikers steady.

A worried meeting of the directors of the companies was called to consider the continuing deadlock. "That man Dawson is the trouble," Paul announced briefly to the chairman. "Get rid of him, and the backbone of the strike is permanently dislocated. He's a born mischief-stirrer."

"Pity he can't be hung. . . ."

". . . Or tarred and feathered."

Judge Florence reminisced from the head of the table: "In '68 we knew what to do with such riff-raff."

"It can be handled," Dudley Randolph inserted blandly. "He isn't popular with many of the men, as it is. The local unions despise him. Let me have the matter . . . investigated. He won't trouble us long."

"Good."

"Your son is a bit troublesome too, Mr. Judson," confessed Henry Tuttle. "Too bad he should be tangled up in it. This thing's got to be settled; with these new English orders, it's suicide for us to withhold any force that can stop this criminal strike."

Kane looked sideways at Paul Judson, who kept his eyes on the table. The satellite spoke up uncertainly. "I'll tell you something—privately—about him, that can stop his talking . . . if we must use it."

Tuttle nodded, after a glance at the inscrutable downcast gaze of the vice-president.

"Is there anyone else?" said the chairman. "That lawyer, Spence?"

"No," said Tuttle, decidedly. "He's a lawyer; a lawyer thinks as his clients do," and he smiled acidly. "Bivens, of the *Voice of Labor,* Bowden, Pooley, employ him. He won't risk losing his livelihood . . . or go further than they will."

"It's time, Henry," Paul addressed the corporation counsel, "to go ahead with our scheme. We've won the election; minor matters can be—er, investigated, or otherwise handled. But as long as the strike lasts, we are losing; our profit sheets show it. First your move, then . . . the militia. I advised it long ago, you remember."

The meeting closed with the uncomfortable, and frequent, impression that, as usual, Paul Judson's sight alone had visioned correctly future troubles—and their remedies.

The last week of November saw the playing of the withheld card. Hurrying clerks of Tuttle and Mabry served on each houseowner the final notice of eviction, granted suddenly by County Judge Little.

Roscoe Little, one of the Jackson family of that name, held a perpetual lien on the judgeship because of his triumphant spinelessness. He had never been known to express a decided opinion on either side of a question; a weak-eyed hail-fellow-well-met, with a chin like the German crown prince, he spent his mornings ruling in favor of corporation attorneys, his afternoons absorbing comic weeklies and whiskey-and-sodas at the University Club. He was unmarried; facetious barristers insisted that he could not commit himself even in affairs of the heart.

There was nothing for the miners to do but move; the rifles of the augmented deputies were an unanswerable persuasion. A few miles up the valley the gray sandstone hill behind the mountain was undeveloped. Spence secured the land at a slight rental, and here tents and scrap-timber shacks did something to keep out the bitter winds of winter.

Pelham helped in the moving, as did many of the socialists. Old Peter came up to him in Hewintown the last day. "Mornin', Mr. Pelham."

"What you doing here, Peter?"

The ancient negro pointed with pride to the shined badge on his coat. "Dey done made me a deppity, dey is."

Pelham turned off.

"Mr. Pelham, ole Tom Cole done come back."

"Not dead yet?"

"You cain't kill 'im. Dey cut 'im open, but he growed back agin. He am powerful sickly, do'. De Ole Boy'll cotch him nex' time; he nacherally favors preachers."

"But not company deputies, Peter?"

The negro chuckled off; Pelham walked back with Dawson from the new shack village. The big organizer was thoroughly out of spirits. "It just ain't moving, Judson."

"What's especially wrong?"

"The negro question, for one thing."

"I know," Pelham said slowly. "Our white labor won't assimilate them, as the rest of the country's labor does to the most backward white races. They're a perpetual scab menace."

"Hell, yes," in sobered agreement. "Then, the South's general backwardness."

"That's natural, here. Our capitalists, some of the slave-owning blood, and all inheriting its attitude, feel

less equality: they see labor still as their slaves. Ultimately this will help awaken our people; but now——"

"That's the hell of it; we ain't got the public with us. What with petty union squabbles, and all—it's a job to make a dent in a saint's patience."

"Any chance of a sympathetic strike?"

"What can you do with Bowden and these yellow pups?"

The enthusiasm of the workers, dragged down physically by the hard rigors, slipped lower and lower. Picketing continued, and each arrival of new trainloads of northern scabs threatened a break; but something of the original zest had gone.

Pelham, however, found a compensating zest, in which life overpaid him for the wintry gloom at strike headquarters. After a glum day with the dispirited leaders he could count upon a solace that overbalanced worry and sorrow; downhearted planning for the intransigent struggle gave way to warm-hearted dusk dreams of a future bent to heart's will; the mines and miners were deserted for Jane.

"It doesn't seem fair, dearest dear, for us to be so unreasonably happy, when Ben Wilson, and his tubercular wife, and all the rest, have so little. . . ."

"Your father isn't a happy man."

". . . No. He may have been as happy as we, once; fancy him as a young lover! There is a price for ambition centered in grasping things: the soul dries up and shrivels."

"Poor man!"

"This is the real wealth. . . ."

He took her within his arms. At home in his kiss, her lips parted slightly within his, like a bud daring to offer its tenderest petals to the crush of the enveloping wind. When he let her go, he lay slack with delicious unrest.

Abruptly he sat up, a decisive ring in his voice. "I'm going to marry you, Jane."

"I had hoped so." She could not prevent the dimple from smiling within her rounded cheek.

"I mean—now!"

"To-night?"

"I'll get the license to-morrow, adorable child—and we can have Dr. Gulley, or the mayor——"

"Let's have His Honor! An Irish blessing isn't to be scoffed at, and the Free Tabernaclers, as rebels, are a bit pallid. 'The Courthouse Wedding'—how your mother will relish that!"

"They wouldn't come anyhow——"

"It isn't that; but they've gotten so used to your shocking them, that life would lose its savor if you couldn't achieve a fresh shock every month or two. I'm glad my new suit came——"

"As if that made any difference!"

"Ah, it will make a lot—to His Honor, for instance, and whatever reporters carry word of it to the society editresses. 'A dove-colored traveling suit,' they'll call it——"

"Wouldn't red be more appropriate?" he queried judiciously. "With the local en masse as best man, and the Suffrage Association as matron of honor——"

"Don't be horrid. I'll have Mrs. Anderson, and you can bring along your precious Lane Cullom, who is so sure that Nellie Tolliver would be much better for you."

"It's almost a Christmas wedding! We'll steal off for that week to Pascagoula and New Orleans we mentioned. We could take the Gulf Express to-morrow night—you have a time table; I brought it out last month, when we aircastled on honeymoons. . . . But just think, if you hadn't scorned the country club, you might have had either of the Birrell boys, or——"

"You angler! It's not too late. . . . No; I have the pick of the bunch."

"Jane, my . . . wife." There was comfort and joy in the word.

Considering the matter alone, he was delighted he had dared the plunge. It was not easy, now, to prevent yielding to the watchful voices ever whispering to him, wakened by Dorothy Meade, refired by the rocketing affair with Louise, and now restirred by Jane herself. He had even wandered once or twice down Butler's Avenue and the furtive alleys behind, obsessed with red-lit imaginings of what went on behind those night-lighted windows. His aggressive purism had left him; love should be freely given and taken, he told himself. And it was to be his!

Odd that he had suggested New Orleans, when Louise Richard might be there. . . . It was a relief that that affair was dead. . . . This was to-day; the to-morrows were Jane's.

After his departure Jane located the time-table. She studied the formal details dreamily. To-morrow night, by this time, they would be . . . And when they had passed this place, and that, what would they be saying? What doing?

The black and white schedule merited respect; it would time their first day . . . night . . . together.

She laid it aside with a blush; then, bidding her fancies behave, she read over the unemotional schedule until she knew it, appropriately, by heart.

Gulf Express	P. M.
Hazelton	.....8.07
ADAMSVILLE	Ar. 8.20

Exercising the best man's prerogative, Lane Cullom insisted upon having the abbreviated wedding party as

his guests at a bridal dinner. The chef at the University Club grill lifted the covers promptly at six, in order that the Queen and Crescent's prized express might not have to cool its wheels in the new Union Station, waiting for the essential pair.

Lane, a satisfied fatigue relieving the crease in his brow, almost missed the first course. "I had to see that the eggnog was mixed properly, Pelham, before it was frozen,—soup or no soup."

The last delicious morsel melted upon their tongues; the host paid a final flying visit to the club's pantry, conscripting two pocketfuls of rice. "Now let's go!"

ADAMSVILLE ..... |Lv. 8.30|

Jane leaned over the back railing of the observation platform, as the engine grunted a command to the wheels to take up their proletarian revolutions; the clanged gate quivered before her; her husband stood at her side. She leaned for a final finger-flutter to the two friends, peering at her out of the golden haze thrown by the big station lamps.

"Good luck," she called back. Her handful of the hailed rice, scooped desperately the last minute, was aimed badly; it baptized a bewildered family, chiefly children, still looking for the obtrusively obvious exit.

"Good luck," Pelham's deeper tones echoed hers.

The oiled switches, affectionately clearing the way for the long iron carriage and its coupling hearts, creaked beneath them, as the cars slid and jangled down the yards, between the furnacetown shanties, into the winter-shriven suburban streets. Jane's placid smile followed her man as he joined two of the comfortable chairs; her hands locked within his, her cheek rested against the warm roughness of his, her eyes watched the flying world

curtsey and part behind them, then gradually coalesce into a welded and blurred oblivion. They were turning their backs upon the mountain her Pelham loved; not for good . . . yes, for good, but not for all time.

West Adamsville .....|.....8.37|

The mountain was going with them; its inscrutable mass, off to the left, still followed, a protection and a reminder. What a boyish fancy of his, that it mothered him! Well, it could safely leave the task to her, Jane reflected; he was worth mothering—her first child. . . . A sudden freshet of tenderness lifted her arm around his shoulder.

This station they had just left—to think that its scattered home-lights held striving hearts who had followed her Pelham through the harsh campaign, and looked to him as children to their leader. And now he was hers, hers! And she would see to it that she kept him theirs.

Hers . . . as she must be his. She dared to inch her fancies beyond their previous bounds. As a modern woman, she reminded herself, she knew from her reading the essential facts of mated life; but feelings were of different breed: words could not communicate unfelt emotions, they could only evoke memories of those formerly experienced. The emotional Atlantic lay before her. . . . To-night? She could not tell.

Coalstock .....|.....8.57|

"What are you thinking of, dear?" she asked.

"Geographically. . . . Reminiscing. . . . Bragg County ends in a few miles; my last speech, before the final one in Main Park, was in the Elks' Hall here."

She looked with added interest at the bare platform, the forlorn pair of station idlers, the morose baggage

man trundling away a lone trunk. He looked up as they passed, started, took off his hat to the recent candidate.

"I like that man," she declared inconsequentially. "He knows you."

The glassed spaces of the observation platform were small defense against the subtle penetration of the winter night. The bland porter navigated down the car aisles, bundling steamer blankets, which radiated inward the body's waves of heat.

"The old life dead, the glad new one born," her husband mused aloud. "Except a man become as a little child again—— For it is a heaven we plan."

"A democracy, not a kingdom, dear?"

"Never a kingdom, unless with a queen equally powered; and no subjects. The old subserviences are dying; with us they are dead. A real equality of mating; the slave-woman attitude gone forever, as we are laboring on the mountain to end the slave-man attitude."

"It is a friendly old universe, dear, to fling us together, on the uncertain upwhirl of the lassoed earth, to complement each other. . . ."

"Blossom to blossom, bird to bird, man to woman," he paired.

"Jackson in two hours," he went on, after a pause.

Was he consciously making conversation, to keep her mind off of what must be the burden of its agitated thinking, the growing tumult stirred and heightened by the night's resistless progress toward their own intimate morning? She appreciated the diversion; soon he was deep in the rich memories of easy Jackson days.

Her mind twisted over other matters at the same time. Marriage meant so little to a man, compared to what it meant to a woman! Pelham, she believed, was chaste; he had told her so. There was no way of knowing. But love accomplished changed woman irrevocably. It

seemed unfair. She re-breathed a silent prayer that she would not find him coarse . . . even a little. It had been disillusioned Dorothy who had warned her that all men were. . . . Not her man.

Twice the porter had opened the door with suggestive obtrusiveness; it must be nearly eleven. Shivering with a disquiet almost unbearable, she responded to the caressing modulations in his voice, as he told of his childhood; even though its warmth was caused by recollections of other arms than her own. His deep affection for his mother, despite the occasional flippancy he used now, was no secret to the wife.

The whistle wailed rhythmically across the level stubble fields.

His face lit up. "That was Newtown we whizzed by; my father started it. Hideous place!" But the tone was affectionate.

Jackson .....|....11.02|

He consulted his watch; they were running four minutes behind.

As the train picked up speed, his eyes bored the obscurity. "That dark place . . . somewhere there is the road to Uncle Jimmy Barbour's farm. You'll see it all with me soon, dearest dear."

She looked ahead toward the darkness he indicated. Now they had plunged past it.

She heard the porter approach for the third time. Pelham's tone was a trifle uneven. "The state-room's made up? Thanks very much. Will you call us in time for Pascagoula?"

Us! . . . Jane's heart thumped; she wondered if his ears could fail to hear it.

"Dearest," he said slowly, "will you go in? . . . I'll come in half an hour. . . . Will that be enough?"

Her reply was so low, she wondered if he could have heard. He held her to him for a moment, as if unhappy to lose one moment of her. And then she shut the door, and turned into the lighted isolation of the stateroom, soon to offer her to a panicky common publicity.

. . . She heard him open the outer door; her flurried fingers summoned the unbetraying darkness.

	A. M.
Lower Peachtree	4.10

Jane stared out of the bare three inches of the misted window; she had raised the curtain that much. The train was gaining momentum again. The unbroken night sped by; only her imagination could give it form and life. The unbroken future lay ahead; drowsily she reflected that only her imagination, her shaping hand, could mold it to the heaven they both desired. Pelham was at last asleep . . . her husband was asleep. . . .

Her hand lowered the curtain again. Facing the chill blackness without the window, she tried to drowse off. At length she turned toward him, for the moment absent, yet still tangibly hers. She snuggled into the warmer place by his side, touching him to make sure he was still there.

MOBILE	Ar. 4.45
MOBILE	Lv. 4.53

There was no consciousness stirring in the breathing state-room, to note the stop and the few belated night-travelers for the western gulf region. But in their dreams these two, separated by sleep, were again united. There was a smile playing across Jane's cheek; and a deep content resting upon Pelham's face.

East Pascagoula	7.01

Pelham sat on the edge of a chair, his face downcast

in mock despair. "You make me feel so useless, Jane! Not even a dress to hook up the back——"

Altering a final hatpin, she smiled a query to him. "Is it on straight, beloved? The train wobbles so. . . . Dresses were hooked up the back ten years ago; of course, you've had practice on Mother Judson's. . . . Stand up a moment." With great gravity she readjusted his stick-pin. "There!"

He pulled her to the window. "Look—Back Bayou! Though it's really a pudgy finger of the gulf. And schooners . . . this side. . . . Isn't it gorgeous?"

The train, perched on a spidery trestle, crawled high above the sloshing waves, broken by blackened oyster-bed stakes and a skiff slapping against the dismembered head of a narrow pier. Seabirds rose in glancing curves, the red face of the sun lit the waters on both sides of the three-masters tacking out beyond Horn Island. Abruptly the water was blotted out at the end of the bridge by stumpy sedge fields, stretching to a fringe of low pines framing the sparkling water beyond . . . then trim white houses. The train slowed.

Pascagoula .....|.....7.13|

"Here we are," Pelham's joyful tones fathered the last of the luggage, laboriously lowered by the stout porter.

The husband beckoned the nearest hackman, a darky patriarch venerable as his grizzle-flanked steed. "The Ocean House, please."

Jane settled into Pelham's crescenting arm.

"We're here," he added fatuously. "Isn't it——"

"Glorious!"

They stared ahead together, to the sandy beach and the sun-glitter of the water.

XXII

PASCAGOULA and the gulf towns boast themselves, quite properly, as warm weather resorts. Jane, coming from a northern city, had never quite understood how Southerners could go further south for the summer; but the immediate sight of this resort in winter convinced her. Pascagoula in December was kin to Coney Island in March—a background built of flimsy, emptied by the chill; a tenantless shell, whose pleasure-seekers hibernated elsewhere, to more substantial shelter. It had its own incongruous charm for lovers, who never mourn at isolation.

There was a thoughtful delight in tempting the shaky remnants of wharves, broken and scattered by the whiplash of the last equinoctial storms, and as yet not rebuilt. They visited by launch the breakwater islands, Horn Island with its fishing colony, Deer Island's populous turtle farms, and the lighthouses and dismantled fort upon the sandy spit called Ship Island. Here they walked a beach littered with curled conchs, horseshoe crab shells, and débris from the deeper waters washed up for a glassy-eyed view at the hitherto unseen sun.

By electric line they touched at Beauvoir for an afternoon—Beauvoir, as surely of the Old South as the decaying mansions at Jackson; a great-pillared white house back in a grove of giant leafless oaks. Its ample spaces and huge hand-hewn beams belonged less to the faded Confederate soldiers and their wives tenanting it than to its memories of Jefferson Davis, that passionate advocate

of slavery, whose name is enshrined beside the warrior leaders of the buried cause.

"We can enjoy the firm beauty of the place—it is so alien, so remote," Jane meditated, as, her arm upon his shoulder, she turned Pelham for a last view at the mausoleum of gray hopes. "Like the Punic war; or the time-blotted conquests of the Incas, before the Spaniards came."

"Yes; their cause, with their time, has grown unreal. Slavery is almost prehistoric, with the modern battles upon us. Old Grandfather Judson knew Jeff Davis, and visited here. . . . Thank God the South didn't win!"

"Slavery would have died its natural death anyway."

"But union was worth while. . . . Isn't it, dearest?"

She pressed his arm appreciatively.

They spent the rest of the week in New Orleans. During these days his untried fantasies changed to reality, with the gradual knowledge of this lithe, lovely girl beside him, who had, by some freak of good fortune, given herself to him . . . taken him for her mate. It was hard to avoid the rut of old phrasings of the ever-new relationship.

Out of the thick turmoil of the French Market and the gaudy fittings of the Hotel Iberville they found their way to the river, and wandered up its leisurely levee. The ancient lure of the sea spoke in the rank smell of drying nets and decaying barnacles on the tide-abandoned piles, of redolent fishing catboats and tarry roping. She curled behind him on a solitary bale of cotton awaiting belated shipment, staring out at the muddy water, and the tangled masts and rigging up and down stream.

"How would you like to sail the seven seas?" she asked idly. "Down this river, over the gulf and the Caribbean, and then out across the unroaded way of the world's

ocean?" Watching him dust his feather-gray ash on a splintery beam, she shielded a lighted match to give new life to the moist brown mass packed within the bowl.

"With you along?"

"That would be yours to say. You must remain free, as I am; if love lasts, yes; if not——"

"And that very freedom, that modern marriage includes, adds preciousness to love; the danger of losing forges a stronger bond."

"Thus freedom involves a slavery greater, because voluntary. Where my heart is, I am content to serve," she smiled.

But something within her doubted how deep this shrining of freedom went. She had noticed, at last night's opera, an attractive girl in another box bow to her husband with provoking familiarity. "Louise Richard, a friend of Lane Cullom's," he had explained; "I met her in Adamsville." But . . . her husband! If any woman presumed to get free with him, modernism would be flung aside for primitive emotions. Mating bred possession. . . . He was such a lover! She smiled a perverse thanksgiving that he was—a little—coarse. Love must be planted in the earth, to grow toward the stars.

Pelham's thought drove down a not dissimilar channel. Of course Jane was entitled to hold to her idea of freedom; there was little chance of her ever wanting to make it more than an idea. But let a man dare sneak into her affections, and there would be an immediate casualty list, which would not include a descendant of the Judsons. He was amused at the bloodthirsty throwback; nevertheless, he would do something. . . . His thought recurred to the sight of Louise Richard, between the acts at the theater; how incomparably superior Jane was! And yet. . . . Freedom in love had its com-

pensations. . . . Louise had said something about revisiting Adamsville. . . . At once he put the half-formed fancy out of his mind; Jane was enough, now and henceforth.

He returned, at a tangent, to the former subject. "Just as you are free to remain skeptical about socialism, while I am of it."

"Not skeptical, Pelham; but . . . Put it this way. It hasn't the overwhelming importance to me that it has to you. To me, woman's cause comes first; with suffrage an essential incident. I do see that socialism doesn't go to the roots of everything."

He exclaimed lazily, "Of course not! And I like, more and more, your idea, that floated hazily out one night—that geography lay beneath all the economic forces we socialists orate over."

"On behalf of my intelligence, I thank you," she teased.

"Silly! The idea is underneath Marx and the rest; but it hasn't been said clearly yet. I've dipped into more American history, these workless weeks; it fits amazingly there. . . .

"This stuff the professors wax magniloquent over, that America was planned as a land of freedom! Mere fudge and fury! Who planned it free? The Spaniards, arrogant haters of the common people? The paternalistic French? The Dutch and Swedes, just as committed to autocracy? . . ."

"There were the 'freedom-loving Englishmen' . . ."

"Jamestown, settled by gold-hunting, venturesome gentlemen of King James' Court! So Maryland, and the Carolinas; with Georgia merely to give an opportunity for homeland failures to build a younger England, casted as the old. Plymouth, all of New England, except Rhode Island, wanted merely State Puritanism, under the old

feudal system. Roger Williams was an exception; Penn's inner light saw a vision of ultimate democracy. But—two out of thirteen!"

"No, it wasn't planning that made democracy and freedom our spreadeagle catchwords," she agreed.

"It was the land," he took up the thread. "The land has expressed itself, and will express itself more magnificently in the future, in the achieved reality of those Fourth of July slogans. Pioneer hardships develop men equal in their labors and their needs; crude democracy thrives along civilization's frontiers. The restless Arabs, the migratory Israelites, grew brotherhood as self-protection. Europe's cramping strait-jackets could not fit empty miles of prairie, or stream and mountain and farm-land ready to mint gold when man's labor was poured on them."

"The idea helps clear history," she helped on the mood. "Protected Egypt and Babylon, guarded by desert and sea and swamp, grew a hot-housed tyranny because of their over-fertile rivers; somewhat as New Orleans here."

"To show the influence another way, I've often thought of this parallel. Compare the languages of Europe and America. The Eskimo, harshly explosive and guttural, corresponds to the Russian; the freezing air chops off the final syllable into a bark or cough. The dialects of the Iroquois and northern Algonquins are similar to the harshness of Teutonic and Scandinavian countries; the soft melodiousness of Spanish, French, Italian, is found in words like 'Miami,' 'Appalachicola,' 'Tuscaloosa,' 'Monongahela,' with their easy liquids and lazy final vowels. The country itself creates the language, the facial expressions, the bodies and habits of men."

"That's true—and new, to me. Of course it's a platitude that the little fragments of Greece, locked apart by

mountain and sea, were themselves the cause preventing Greece from uniting into a great nation——"

"Just as the long western field of Italy fitted her to be a unifying world power."

She confessed, "I've since found the same idea expanded charmingly by Fairgrieve. Phœnicia and Israel were important because they were on the way connecting the Nile to the twin rivers——"

"The earth's hand is in it all. Great cities follow the rivers, or the newer streams of iron we call railroads; civilizations grow where differing cultures touch, as at the meeting of Asia, Europe, and Africa. Think what its location—sea-walled and sea-warmed—has made of the island miles of England! . . . Mountains breed freedom-lovers; my mountain made me."

"My thanks to it! It has stirred up trouble——"

"Yes." He continued slowly, "All we have been through in Adamsville—that was only the mountain speaking through its human mouthpieces. Our country's first democracy was squabbling competition; then came selfish coöperation, for the few on top: trusts and monopolies. The hill's rich heart expresses that in the mining companies . . . in my father. But it gives enough worth to the plain man to allow him to unite with his fellows, and mold this destructive selfishness into saner brotherhood, wider coöperation—the labor movement, groping after democracy; I and the others are the mountain speaking in that. It is the prime mover, the hero and the villain, shifting us about at its will to express all that lies hidden in its rich interior."

"We must make it join the local. . . . I hope it favors suffrage."

"Joyful joker!"

"I like what you say about the vastness of America," she repeated.

"More than vastness. It has the proper balance of material that yields not too easily, so that an Egyptian race of slaves must follow; nor with such difficulty that it must remain like the backward Eskimos. Its men and women will be self-sure, mentally able to build democracy in industry, in government, in everything. What a world, when we grow up to our words—when classes blend into one class of worthy men and women——"

"Supermen?"

"Another way of saying it. . . . When exploitation is ended, when we produce for need and not profit, when a man's highest selfishness will be to serve all, not pile up a backyard hoard of gold. Call it socialism or what you please, it will come; it is self-planted by and in our soil. The mountain will win, in the long run, not for its despoiler, but for all of its red-handed, ore-stained children. Work will be distributed, life lengthened, wealth and joy evened——"

"A big program cut out for Mr. Pelham Judson!"

"Not for me, heavens, no! I can only do my little part. It will use me . . . just as it has used poor Babe Cole, dead on the railroad track, or his brothers, dead in the explosion and the shooting; just as it uses even Dick Sumter, Henry Tuttle, incredible little Roscoe Little, whose judicial rompers are merely a materialization of the greed of the corporations. All of their rich thefts will be taken from them, when the scales have finally adjusted themselves. . . ."

"Nice old earth!" She patted the post beside her affectionately. "Just like a big brown doggie! We think, and bother; and to it we are no more than irritations on its skin, or little insects bred of it there. Our stirring annoys it: Vesuvius and Pelé, or an earthquake. . . . The old world sniffs and snuffles down the fenced sky,

leashed to the sun, its rope always a little shorter. . . . And a good warm sleep to it at the end, before cold night sets in."

Pelham shook his head in despair. "You say it so much better than I—the final word. . . ."

"Come on, if we're to take that trip to Lake Pontchartrain before night." She prodded him off the bale, linking a comradely arm within his. "You notice that woman's 'final' word, as always, is followed by man's lament that she says the last thing. No," as he sought to answer, "it needs no footnote. At least I have you to myself this week, before the mountain woos you from me again."

Tired by the flat miles of rice-fields, swamp-land, and bayou, they returned to the haven of the hotel. Pelham had the elevator wait while he secured an armful of local papers.

"Nothing from Adamsville," scanning the pages rapidly, unaware how the mountain still held him. "Nothing. . . . Here it is. Another fight, with the invariable demand for the militia."

"You don't think they'll——"

"I certainly hope not. That would cause a smash-up."

The week ended; the return began. Just above Lower Peachtree, they secured an early edition of the *Times-Dispatch,* and found that the strike shared first-page headlines with the elaborate plans for the iron city's semi-centennial. The attack was more serious than the out-of-town papers had reported. Two guards, three strike-breakers, and an uncertain number of strikers had been killed; John Dawson's indignant statement that the deputies had fired first, and without provocation, was smothered in the body of the story; while the front page heading quoted Judge Florence to the effect that the com-

pany saw no other way to stop bloodshed than by immediate presence of the soldiers. A hurried meeting of the Commercial Club backed up this demand.

"They'll try to wipe the boys out," groaned Pelham, bitterly. "They may have planted this fight, for an excuse. We must have won too many strike-breakers."

An inside page held an account of the conviction of Nils Jensen, Benjamin Wilson, Lafe Puckett and a negro named Moses Pike for attempting to dynamite the ramp opening.

"They're out for blood now," Pelham commented somberly, after reading the brief announcement.

"They won't get you for anything, dear?" she queried quickly.

"I don't believe so. . . . You never can tell."

On their arrival, he sent Jane home by taxi, and went at once to strike headquarters. Two men lay sleeping on a rug thrown into the corner, their faces gray and exhausted. A young miner, his arm bandaged, sat at the table with Spence and several others.

"Hello, Judson. Just in time for the big round," the lawyer greeted grimly.

They walked over to the window. "Two companies arrive to-night," Spence continued. "By to-morrow they'll proclaim martial law for the entire mountain district. . . ." His tone grew shrilly significant. "That includes the place where the boys live now."

"What can we answer?"

The lawyer lifted wearied shoulders. "Do what we can. We won't quit, but—— I saw what they did in '04, remember."

"No chance for justice from the soldiers? I know some of the boys in the local company——"

"My dear man, the company gave 'em new brass but-

tons, new rifles, new bullets! Where will they put those bullets, do you suppose? It's irony for you: most of the soldiers were once laborers; labor's money pays for their food and their rifles; and labor receives their fire. Of course, if we can avoid trouble—— It's our only hope; we can win, if we can prevent a smash-up."

"What about Jensen?"

"I'm appealing; that'll tie it up for a year. But the cards are marked, and they are dealing."

Pelham escaped from the headquarters of suffering for a hurried trip out to the miners' tent settlement. On the way back, he saw in the state road ahead a familiar boyish figure; as he reached it, fourteen-year-old Ned turned and saw him.

"Hey, give us a lift, Pell!" The brother climbed in impetuously. "Didn't expect to see me, did you? Father's going to let me be a deputy, next year! Does the company let you use these roads?"

"This is a state road, Ned; it's as much mine as the company's."

"Gee, I thought they all belonged to the company! What do you know, Pell—Sue's getting married Friday!"

"So I read," rather crudely. "Is he a nice chap?"

"Fine as silk! His father's in the insurance business at Hartford—he has two yachts and an aeroplane—I'm going to visit them next summer——"

"You've gotten thick already, I see. I'm glad she's getting married."

"And what do you suppose!" Ned's eyes grew round and mysterious. "Tom Cole's really dead at last! He got pneumonia, and died in three days. The funeral was in Lilydale—Nell 'n' me went!"

"Nell and I."

"Anyhow, mother sent the most wonderful bunch of white roses you ever saw—all that were growing on the mountain. I helped pick 'em. And we're living in a wonderful big house in Glen Kenmore! Gee, you ought to see it!"

"Old Peter's still on the mountain?"

"Yes, an' he's going to teach me how to fiddle! Father said I could learn."

"Here's your company road, now," as they reached the Fortieth Street gap road. "Give my love to mother and the girls."

Another death occurred, announced by a simple wire to Pelham signed "Grandma." Thoughtfully he pulled out of a desk compartment the slim file, regretting the unanswered note on top. He studied soberly the careful letters, the slight tremble in the curves and capitals. To think that that deep-channeled hand could never form another line!

The Barbour homestead came back to him, a richly scented recollection. His little room, peach-petal sprays rubbing their silken invitation on the rain-specked panes . . . the teetering climb on unsteady branches, to the succulent prize just within fingers' reach . . . the shaded colonnade of the oak avenue before . . . the smell of flowers: pansies and roses, begonias and the white sweetness of magnolia fuscata. . . .

His nose breathed in the memory of the fragrance; and of the indescribably musty odor he associated with old age, a compound of pungent pennyroyal pillows, of kerosene, which grandfather always rubbed in his hands to warn off the mosquitoes, of lavender and rose leaves in sachet pads on the bureau. . . . A scent unmistakable, anciently sweet. All day his office was full of it.

He took the telegram home to Jane at supper. They were staying at the Andersons', until their own home, a

small two-story house on Haviland Avenue, was ready to accept them.

Jane reread the brief message. "Of course, we'll both go, Pelham. I'd wanted so to meet your grandfather! He meant so much to you. . . ."

"I thought we could go this spring to see them. . . ."

He stopped with Jane at the Jackson Hotel, overshadowed now by the new Lomax House; although Uncle Derrell had long ago sold his interest, to move out on the Greenville Road. Alf Barbour, who had been elected to the legislature, was as glad to see him as his uncle and aunt; and Lil, who had been married two years, proudly displayed her fat six-months-old bundle of joy for Jane's appreciation. These were all Barbours, Pelham thought in curious detachment, as he was; he was at home with them. He imagined the cold formality of Pratt Judson's big house, and rejoiced again at the kinder heritage predominant in his own blood.

Why, the grandparents had been almost a second father and mother to him. Undisturbed he went through the old house again—Paul was stopping at Pratt's—reliving the old days; grandmother's dear frail hands clutched tremulously at his sleeve. "You were always such a comfort to him, Pell. . . ."

She fell in love with Jane, too. The girl set herself out to be sweet and considerate—to say nothing that might jar or ruffle the kindly unprogressiveness of the people.

"You have a lovely wife, Pell; like one of the Barbours," grandmother whispered lovingly.

When he repeated this to Jane, she answered, "And that is her highest praise. . . . It means a lot to me."

At the graveyard, his mother's black figure stumbled heavily beside her husband's stiff preoccupation. Son and father did not look once at each other; there was no recognition. But Mary came over beside her brother, and

his quietly sobbing family, and held Pelham to her breast. 'Mother's own big boy. . . . He was always so fond of you."

Then she did an unexpected thing. With a quick motion she turned to the younger woman beside him, and kissed her cheek. "I pray God you make my son happy," she whispered. "May he never be unhappy. . . ." She cast a half-broken look back to where she had been. Sobbing heavily, she left them.

The slow echoes of "The Sweet By-and-By" ceased; the simple service ended. The horses stepped down the dirt road to their next task. Jane packed to return on the morning train.

Pelham, in answer to Uncle Jimmy Barbour's questions, went into a restrained discussion of his new beliefs.

"I don't understand all about socialism," the uncle finally decided, "but it seems to be, as you say, for the brotherhood of man. And surely that is following in the Master's footsteps."

"And I know Mary's boy wouldn't do anything we could be ashamed of," said Aunt Lotta, in soft certainty.

The simple trust moved him.

As he was leaving, Pelham took his aunt aside. "Don't let grandmother worry too much over—it," he said softly. "It's all so beautiful, and natural. If you believe in a heaven, you know he is happier there than here. Just as flowers blossom and die, just as the leaves stretch out their green leaves and then grow bare under winter skies, grow old, and die, while their place is taken by the younger saplings—it is all natural, and beautiful. We wouldn't want an endless day, or an eternal spring; there must come night and winter, that the new blossoming may follow."

"It is a lovely idea," Aunt Lotta said brokenly. "It will comfort mother."

Then he and Jane turned north again, to take up the unfinished labors at Adamsville—the hazard of losing the strike, and the delight of building their home together.

XXIII

THE iron city interrupted its bitter struggle for an event of local magnitude. January 17th, 1917—Adamsville celebrated its semi-centennial! Fifty years since the first farm-shack had been built on the farm beside Ross's Creek: ten years of sleepy and indeterminate farm growth, with a forty year waking that had made it the third largest city in the oldest quarter of the country! Fifty years between old Thaddeus Ross's unhitching his single horse to begin plowing, and the creation of the billion-dollar Gulf Iron and Steel Corporation, with his great-grandson Sam Ross as president, and Judge Florence and Paul Judson on the board.

A "White Way" had been opened up both sides of the four main avenues, with five great white globes every thirty feet. Streamers of patriotic tri-colored lights lined the side streets, converging to a tapering pole in the center of Main Park—a vast pyramid of glitter and sparkle. Two new bandstands flashed back the twinkle from their shining woodwork; an ornate speakers' stand lifted above between them. Bunting draped the thoroughfares, the national emblem interwoven with the flags of France, England, Belgium, Russia, Japan, thickest over the court house and jail, the big retail houses, the offices of the mining and furnace companies, and the rambling cotton mills. Here the gay cloth framed the faces of women and children, busily bending, in the half gloom, above vast black machines—noisily weaving, in the human silence, cloth for more bunting.

The new Commercial Club building, a transplanted

Greek temple, marble white, was to be dedicated, as part of the celebration. The gleaming symbol of adamantine prosperity was christened with champagne; the punch bubbled for gay members and wives, who applauded the eloquence of Dudley Randolph, the retiring president, as he relinquished the gavel to Paul Judson.

"This is the man who has saved Adamsville. I may be giving away a secret, but—we all know Paul Judson's backbone. But for it, we might have union miners swaggering down our avenues and boulevards. Instead, we have the militia, our sons under the waving banners of red and white and blue——" Frantic cheers submerged the rest of the sentence. "Mark my words: the time's coming when these law-defying strikers will feel the militia's iron insistence upon the majesty of the law!

"We can handle Adamsville; but that is not enough." His pulsing tones shook and trembled above their heads. "I want to see those same boys marching under that same flag, side by side with the tricolor of France and the Union Jack, against another autocracy greater than the domestic tyranny of the labor union carpet-bagger!" The shouts were whole-hearted, one veteran attempting the yodelled "Coo-ee" of the rebel yell.

"Let the rest of the South hang back," his strident tones shouted, "because of the loss of its cotton trade with Germany. We've got the iron and steel here to lay the rails straight down Unter den Linden, to forge the 42-centimeter guns that will blast the hated house of Hohenzollern into its home, the reddest sub-cellar of Hell! We demand that our country avenge the *Lusitania*—avenge the rape of Belgium—avenge the foul assault on the soul of civilization. And when her citizens speak, Columbia will not lag behind!"

There was a riot of joy as Paul Judson echoed the vigor of the old iron-master. "We have strangled the foe

within," his clearly enunciated syllables stretched forth. "This undemocratic, anti-American principle of union-labor slavery, of a socialism sired by Prussian autocracy, and damned by all the forces of law and order throughout the world——" The reporters could not catch his next words.

"It is a time of prosperity for Adamsville. From the marble palaces of East Highlands to the poorest hovel in Scrubtown or Jones' Hill, we find a united citizenry stepping forth, 'Boost Adamsville' the motto shown on the button on every coat. Let us be united, to lead into the time when democracy has established its universal sway, under the flag that shines with the very stars of Heaven. . . ."

"The old-time eloquence of the South," observed the editor of the *Times-Dispatch* approvingly, "has not left its gifted sons of to-day."

In the packed stuffiness of Arlington Hall, the miners' union held its meeting the same night, to hear the report from the strike committee and act on it. One matter came up first—the motion for the expulsion of Ed Cole from the union. It was John McGue's quick mind that had suspected the negro's treachery, it was he who had seen the actual transfer of the roll of bills from the covetous hands of Jim Hewin to the greedy negro's. Ed Cole, feeling behind him the hidden support of Jack Bowden and the old union crowd, defended himself with schooled dignity. But he could not explain away the money, and McGue's word was not doubted by the members. John Dawson, more age-scarred and mountain-like than ever, led the weary fight to purge the movement. The balloting was four to one for expulsion.

One ugly side-glance of hatred shot out of the negro's face as he left the hall, a look directed toward the corner

where the radical unionists bunched. Then he disappeared.

And now, the real fight. The committee's report was short and definite. The company had refused to accede to the demands for unionization, even with a waiver of all other claims. The committee recommended that the strike be abandoned as lost, or fought out on the same plan, with the additional difficulty caused by the presence of the soldiers.

Bowden was on his feet, a vindictive snarl in his whole bearing. His eyes swept the crammed benches confidently. He was sure of this crowd.

"I ain't sayin' nothin' against John Dawson, and his runnin' of this strike. But it's failed. Even a blind man can see that. I been in conference—Bob Bivens, John Pooley an' me—with Mr. Kane, the company's adjustment man. He has given me this offer direct from headquarters." His look drove this remark straight at Dawson. "The company is willing to settle the matter"—every attention was frozen to the twisted frown of the weak figure erect in the center of the room—"take the men back, on the same terms as before, with the promise of a raise if there is any profit to make it from, laying aside the question of recognition for the future. And I move that resolution, and that the strike committee be discharged—instead of that bull the committee handed us."

"Second the motion!" Pooley's voice blended with a dozen others.

The floor swirled with demands for recognition. The chairman picked out the brawny bulk of Dawson, imperatively calling for the chance to reply. He understood the crisis, and strove to meet it.

"I've been a union man twenty-three years, and I never laid down on a fight yet!"

There was tumultuous applause from the Socialists and the more aggressive of the miners; but it came from a bare half of the hall.

"I'd lie down and die before I'd give up to a gang like that! Accept this dirty proposition which Jack Bowden brings to you—he offered the same thing six months ago, and you wouldn't listen to him—and you set back the union movement in Adamsville ten years. You'll admit you are licked off the map. I don't care whether you call the strike ended, and get into other work here or elsewhere, or keep on fighting—I'll stay here as long as there's any hope, I'll make the national keep me here. . . .

"But don't lie down! They're licked now, and they know it, if you sit steady and don't let them provoke you to violence. You've won, unless——

"You know," he thundered suddenly, his hairy arm outstretched toward the shrinking form of the local agent, "all of you know, that the curse of the American labor movement is the white-livered skunk that sells it out!"

There was wild applause at this, even from the other side of the house.

"I ain't namin' no names, but I say that self-appointed committee that's always runnin' in with offers from the company is treadin' slippery ground . . . just like that nigger we fired out of here for takin' money from company men. It looks rotten—and, by God, no man can say that anything I ever did looks rotten! I call on you men to show 'em that Adamsville miners haven't a drop of quitters' blood in their veins!"

Ben Spence was on his feet, tightening his lips nervously. To keep in the good graces of the Socialists and radicals, and at the same time continue to represent the union in its legal affairs, required all of the tact that he possessed.

"Here, brothers, there ain't no use in calling names or

showing hard feelings. All of us know what John Dawson's done for us—all of us know that Jack Bowden's been a faithful union man for more years than a horse has teeth."

There was a grin at this, and a weak rattle of applause, which encouraged him.

"If we can win by agreement, there's no use turning anything down cold. This offer from Mr. Kane may be just a feeler; maybe the company's ready now to do more. Why not instruct the strike committee, working with brothers Bivens, Pooley, and Bowden, to get in touch with the office again, and see if we can't get more out of them? I believe in using sense at all times. I move that."

There was a scowl on the faces of the *Voice of Labor* crowd as the motion was put, but, after all, Bowden reflected, it was at least a half victory. The motion was carried overwhelmingly, and the committee was instructed to act at once.

When he got to his room at the Mecca Hotel, tired and down-hearted, John Dawson stretched at once on the bed. The phone rang abruptly.

"It's for you, Mac," he called to McGue, who sat scratching his head over a game of solitaire on the greasy wash-stand top.

The shorter man hung up the receiver, puzzled. "It's from Mr. Brant, of the *Register,* he says—and he wants me to go over to Mr. Judson's office right away to see him on something important."

"I'm goin' to bed. See you when you come back." He skidded the huge shoes toward the side of the cheap oak bureau.

There was a knock on the door, a scant six minutes later. John Dawson, brain half asleep, his head screwed into the pillow, grumbled a "Come in!" and turned over slowly.

He sat up quickly, flinging his feet over the edge of the bed to the floor, as Ed Cole's ingratiating face came around the corner of the door.

"Well?" He sat up tensely. He wondered whether to reach for the pistol under his pillow, cursing the fact that McGue had gone. Then he reflected that this negro would never have courage enough to plan any harm.

"What do you want, Cole?"

"You ain' treat me right, Mr. Dawson," said the negro, who kept his hands in a shabby overcoat reaching to the ground. "Ah ain' took no money f'um dat Jim Hewin."

"Come around and see me to-morrow at headquarters. I'm in bed now." He pretended a yawn, still keenly alert.

"You done me dirt, Mr. Dawson. Ah ain' stan' fer dat f'um no man, white or black."

Dawson rose to his feet, and swayed menacingly on his bare toes. "I don't let nobody disturb me after I've gone to bed, Cole. Git out of here." His hand started working its way back along the sheeting.

The negro's startled eyes saw the slow motion; Dawson heard the chatter of his teeth.

"Ah'm—Ah'm gon'ter fix you, Mr. Dawson"—he raised the right hand, weighted with an ugly forty-five.

Dawson acted with all his speed. He threw himself toward the floor sideways, grasping his pistol as he fell. The gun in the hands of the negro roared, flamed; the smoke blinded Dawson's eyes, stung his nostrils. He fumbled with the trigger of his pistol.

Cole's foot shot out; the chair between them bounded grotesquely at him, crashing into his arm, spoiling his aim. He heard the pistol click again. He rose, aiming.

As he saw the direct flare of the hot breath toward him, his own pistol clicked impotently. At dizzy speed his mind traveled—should he try again, or swing the cylinder to the next shell?

How had the negro missed him at that distance?

Then came the sense of the terrific blow caving in his ribs, gutting its way throughout his inside. His huge face, which seemed to the negro to reach almost to the ceiling, gasped into a wrenched grimace of pain; the eyes closed, the mouth popped oddly open, like a frog's. An explosive intake of breath shivered horribly.

Ed Cole retreated in terror, aiming the pistol again, his eyes fascinated by the dark dampness spilling over the crumpled white nightgown. Then his eyes came back to the face.

Steadied against the wall, the wounded mountain that had been a man fumbled at the weapon. His fingers edged open spasmodically. The pistol clattered against the fallen chair.

The great paws reached out toward the negro's face; Cole could imagine their wide clutch rounding his neck. Then they doubled up abruptly, the big form swayed, the knees collapsed, the body crumpled upon the stained floor.

Throwing his pistol out of the window, Ed Cole ran for the stairs. Halfway down he stumbled, crashing noisily into the wooden railing. The clerk dozed, half-awake, trying to make up his mind whether the noise he had heard above called for an investigation or not. He jerked to his feet, his hand aimed for the drawer where his automatic was kept. Before he had reached it, the negro was in the street.

The clerk ran to the doorway, shouting unintelligibly.

Half a block away, two policemen lounging before the station had straightened at the first shot. They saw the running form almost as soon as they started for the hotel. A negro! "Hai! Stop there, you damn' nigger, or we'll shoot you——"

Ed halted, hands in the air. "Ah ain't done nothin'."

The second officer searched him, while the other kept the big automatic rubbed against his stomach. "Nothin' doin', Jim."

"What was that shot back there?"

Ed Cole's wits came back to him. "A white gen'lman, suh, he shot me, an' Ah shot back at him."

"I've a mind to kill you now. Let's give him twenty feet, Jim, then let him have it!"

Cole's arteries seemed frozen. "It was—it was dat union feller, suh—Mr. Dawson. He drawed a gun on me fu'st."

A peculiar look passed from one policeman to another, an expression significant with doubt. There was more in this than mere murder. "Come with us, nigger. If you try any tricks——" The pistol bored into his back.

"Lawd knows, boss," the whites of his eyes tumbled in desperation, "Ah ain' gwinter do no tricks."

The policemen, with two others who had come up, examined the room carefully. One phoned for the wagon, another located the pistol thrown into the littered lot beside.

"Ah was so scared," Cole admitted, his shifty eyes reassured by the attitude of the police, "Ah jus' th'owed dat gun anywhar."

The first officer picked up the weapon beside the chair, sprung the cylinder, and revealed the dented shell. He threw out the charge; each shell had been emptied.

"You say he shot at you first? Don't lie to me, nigger."

"Dat's de Lawd's trufe, sir. Ah ain' lie to no policeman."

Ed Cole was hurried off to the city lock-up, to await removal to the county jail, charged with murder in the first degree.

XXIV

PELHAM and Jane came back from their trip to Jackson in a gentle mood. Death quiets the footfall and lowers the voice instinctively; their joy in the final preparation of the house on Haviland Avenue was unconsciously hushed.

He had his word about the various purchases; but his haphazard taste began to defer regularly to her sense of artistic home-making. The little clashes that came smoothed themselves away.

While she was superintending the unpacking of a treasured dinner set, her aunt's contribution, Pelham volunteered to hang the pictures on the living-room and study walls. She edged out to watch him, and interrupted at once, "Oh, never, never, Pelham! Pictures must be hung at eye-level."

Perturbed eyes met hers. "Ours hang near the ceiling, at home."

"They were probably larger. Mrs. Anderson taught me that. There. . . . And don't you agree now that my taste in wall paper is excellent? This gray oatmeal, as a background——"

"It is cool and lovely. I've grown up among flowers and curlicues."

They did not buy many things, Pelham's uncertain income being a chief cause. While with the company, he had lived up to his salary; from the few pay checks as state inspector he had not been able to lay aside a great sum. This, with a legacy kept untouched from college days, and an income that Jane had from her father's

estate, put them beyond immediate worry; but there was no idle surplus for expensive furnishings. The election, as well as the wedding trip, had cut into his savings; and his present potboiling work—statistical researches for the United Charities reports—did not go very far, nor promise a future.

Remembering these facts, Jane's natural economy sought the less pretentious stores. The dining-room set and the bedroom furniture were substantial, but inexpensive for the taste they showed; the piano and book-cases were paid for on what Lily, the cook and maid-of-all-tasks, called "de extortion plan."

As she approved of the final placing of the pictures, Jane reflected with satisfaction on the fine showing their funds had made; and Pelham, his mind rather on the total shown by the bank's balance slip the first of the month, was glad that the bulk of the buying was ended.

Thoughtfully she studied the room. "That couch could stand two or three pillows. . . . I saw some ruby cretonne that would go wonderfully with that cover."

When she had purchased it and made it up, he had to admit that it was the most colorful spot in the house.

And what a colorful time those first days were! Many of the ordinary achievements toward the joint home brought positive ecstasy.

The puffed pride of those ruby cushions marked the end of the metamorphosis of the house into a home. "It's really presentable, now," she sighed contentedly, as she sat in their own chair, on their own porch of their own dwelling.

Pelham lounged back against her knee, studying the dark countenance of the mountain; somehow its spell had drawn toward it the face of the house, and the unlidded gaze of its blind-less front eyes. There was a pleasant

rustle in his ears, as his wife bent over her sewing; Jane could not resist an occasional tingle of embarrassment at this preoccupation, in his presence, with the intimate mends in her garments. Would she ever dare mend his! What shameless and delightful publicity marriage entailed!

Abstractedly he thought over the outstanding raptures of these days. What simple stuff made the enduring pleasures! There was the thrill, for instance, when he had, with studied casualness, pulled out of his pocket the signed lease, for her inspection. What an unimportant thing, yet wearing somehow the grace of man's protecting, shelter-building rôle! Then the zest of standing beside her while they chose furniture . . . rugs, table, bedroom furniture. . . . The emotional exaltation had been immense. And the first meal they had had in the dining-room, with matter-of-fact Lily in and out in matter-of-fact fashion, and Jane across the white and silver expanse, her face softened by the soft lighting—these moments might become habitual, but the ecstasy of their first tasting had welded a permanent bond connecting the two. Added to this delight in things was the growing joy in each other—the day's cordial comradeships, the splendor of cool nights sacred to love, and reverent gray dawns in which he woke to watch the loveliness of her calm face asleep on the pillow's rumpled primness—these shook him with their intimate beauty.

"Tired, dear?" He put up his hands and caught hers.

"Not a bit. I sighed through sheer animal comfort, I think."

"You've earned a holiday—busy since morning with the house. Get your wraps; you don't choose the club—let's go up to the crest, and watch for Canopus. . . . If we're in luck, he'll be visible in a quarter of an hour."

They reached the vantage place; despite the fitful waverings of the horizon air, they saw the star's golden torch drag fierily over the tree-fretted heights of Shadow Mountain. There was a sullen reddish smolder over the face of this alien sun; but the brief glimpse of the burning visitant from southern skies was an unforgettable experience.

"If we could only watch it from the old top of the mountain."

"The old top, Pelham?"

He traced Nathaniel Guild's idea of the mighty sky-piercing ridge that had once united the iron strata of this crest and the West Adamsville one, with an overlap of sandstone whose grayed relics still crumbled in the small hills flanking the two iron ranges.

"It shrivels our puny importance, doesn't it, dear, to think of the former majesty of these hills!"

"We're as important to ourselves, Pelham."

Together in spirit they climbed the airy darkness that had been the old mountain; their fancies winged back to the shaken ages before man's weak restlessness hid in trees and caves, and came out into the open, to clear away and shape the forests, and split apart the everlasting hills for the malleable wealth hid within them.

But the ecstatic moods could not last forever. The graying embers of the strike re-won their efforts; the inevitable selfishnesses and littlenesses of life came in, to break the filmy web of romance and delight. Man can stay on the high peaks, whether of spirituality or intellect, of surging emotion or unstrung sentiment, but a little while; their rarefied atmosphere, the height of man's upward groping, will not sustain vigorous animal life. When such moments come, if we are in tune we pass into their magnetic sway whole-heartedly; let the little daily

frets, the appetites and prejudices, be in control, and the height is unclimbed, the high emotion lifting another passes unnoticed over our stooping backs.

The two differing personalities found life together a perpetual welter of adjustment. Insofar as they were adaptable, these adjustments were easy; but neither his training, as a favored first son, nor her self-sure nature, helped cushion the continual shocks. Neither had reached the opinionated thirties, when inconsiderate habits have rutted too deeply to permit habitual considerateness; but the two determined wills had no easy task to come to agreement upon even small details of the home life.

Pelham's "picturesque" pipes, as he reminded her the unmarried Jane had always described them, showed a depraved tendency to roost wherever their master finished with them.

"But, darling, you *must* remember," she insisted, in affectionate exasperation. "Lily found one on the piano this morning; I barely moved the sugar bowl, and look at this table cloth! Your old ashes have made it simply filthy. The hall table's marked; your bureau——"

"I always mean to put 'em on the rack," he urged in contrition.

She sniffed distastefully, holding out the offender at the end of dainty fingers. "Here it is."

Again, he would become unreasonably exasperated when she insisted upon asking what meat he would prefer for dinner, when she had him to shop with her. "Mm-hmm, it's a lovely steak," he would agree abstractedly. "Yes, I like ham, too. . . . Or a roast. Darling, I don't care. Get anything."

She felt aggrieved at his callousness upon the momentous topic.

Upon other matters connected with eating he was not

so unopinionated. "Just look here, Jane! Lily's douched the potatoes in fat again. You know that fried starch——"

"Yes, dear, I know . . . by now. You needn't eat any; she'll bring some mashed ones for you."

He grinned surlily. "I'll try a few, Jane; I like them, though they're not good for me. . . . Another spoonful, please."

The country club was another viand of contention. Jane had never enjoyed the inconsequential chatter and watery flirtations that were its chief offer; Pelham found in them a forgetfulness from strike worries and the increasing financial problem.

The week after their sight of Canopus, he announced a determination to drop by for tennis with Lane Cullom, and the dinner afterwards.

"You may see Hollis; it's his spring holiday," his wife observed without inflection.

"I saw he was back. I don't mind, if he doesn't. . . . Sure you don't want to come? For dinner, or afterwards for a few minutes?"

"Dances are so boring, Pell."

"Once in a while I like 'em."

"I'll go next week, if you go then. . . . Don't make a scene with Hollis."

He jerked with needless viciousness at his belt. "Why make such an assumption? I'm not going to make a scene."

Her pen scratched raspingly over the businesslike letter-heads of the State Suffrage Association. "You almost had a fight with John Birrell, at the bowling tournament."

"You exaggerate everything, Jane. There was nothing like it——"

"You told me——"

"I told you, very plainly, that there would have been a fight, if we hadn't held in our tempers. He's a decent fellow; he's still sore about my mining report. The State is again investigating them."

She did not look up.

"Good-night, dear," planting an indecisive kiss on her hair.

"Good-night."

Probably Hollis would be in uniform, he reflected. The boy hadn't lost any time in joining the Yale Battery, when the President's initial break with Germany foreshadowed war.

Just after dinner, his brother Ned charged up. "Hell-o, Pell! Didn't expect to see me, did you? Father let me come, because Hollis was here."

"Aren't we the young sport!"

"There he is—Hey, Hollis! Here's Pell!"

The brother, fine-looking in his well-pressed khaki, came over unhurriedly. "Hello, Pelham. How you making out?"

"Oh, all right. I'm working for the United Charities, you know—Labor Legislation Committee."

"Still fooling with that socialist crew?"

"I'm still a member of the party, Hollis."

"You aren't a foreigner; why don't you get out?"

Pelham's eyes snapped. "Why not learn something about the movement, before you pass judgment on it?"

"You'll wake up soon. The heads of the movement are all pro-German; everybody says so. The government's liable to arrest 'em any minute."

The older brother grinned. "We won't quarrel about it."

"I don't care. I think it's outrageous, agitating against the government, when we may have war——"

Ned's bright eyes went from one to the other. "Pell's

right, you don't know much about socialism, Hollis. I've been reading books at the library—it's great stuff!"

"Let father catch you!"

"I'm glad to see you back, anyhow," Pelham smiled. "Drop by the Charities building some morning and we'll talk over Sheff."

Hollis called, and the brothers had lunch together. Although the younger said nothing of it, Pelham could not help feeling the other's distaste at the dingy side-office in the Charities building where the older did his work now. And Pelham observed with a twinge of envy his brother's lavish order for the meal, his excessive tipping. Hollis planned nothing for the good of the world; money was his without asking; while in his own case. . . .

Well, he did not need to worry yet. He was not making enough to support himself and Jane; but their fund was still sizable; and as soon as the strike uncertainty was over, he could get into something permanent. There was more cause for worry in the stagnation of the mine struggle. Thanks to the men's dogged persistence, production on the mountain was less than half normal. The companies could not hold out forever. Still, the inaction was wearing; he felt a restlessness against the whole fettering situation . . . including the pestering details of the house on Haviland Avenue.

Other causes, unknown to him, egged on this unrest. The years of affection absorbed in his mother had so accustomed him to her that in his later loves he constantly looked for her characteristics, her most trifling traits. Jane was like her, in many ways; but he was discovering more ways in which she was dissimilar. Her directness, for one thing, was not the Barbour sweetness. And since she was not a reincarnation of Mary, and the door to the mountain was shut, not only by the present situation but by the rooted inhibition which forever banned his mother

as the object of his man's affections, the deep imperative urged him forth again. He would be finally content, although he did not phrase it this clearly, with no less than perfection in woman—perfection to him meaning Mary; which is another way of saying that he could not be content. Thus he must still seek. The headstrong wildness of the mountain intensified the gipsying urge. Sooner or later, he felt vaguely, these forces would push him to some definite move. The uncertainty lay as to when, and in what direction, the outbreak would occur.

Opportunity never delays, when the strong heart demands it. A note from Louise told of her arrival in the city, and gave her phone number. First impulse was to ring her up at once; he had not realized how much he wanted to see her. He thought over the matter; there was no harm in one last ride.

He called up both women, alleging a visit to strike headquarters to one, and preëmpting the other for the afternoon. Just before three he claimed the New Orleans girl.

"Come on," he told her delightedly, holding her cool hands hidden in his. "It's too fine an afternoon to rust indoors."

A short while later he experimented diffidently. "You know, I'm married."

"Yes, Mr. Lover; I suppose I saw the lady in my city."

"Well?"

She mimicked his uncertainty. "Well?"

After all, what was the harm? Louise set certain strings in his nature ringing in response to her obvious lure, strings that Jane's finer person did not touch. Why should he cripple himself by denying a rounded development, a full self-expression to his nature?

The fresh majesty of these thoughts quite persuaded him; how could they have escaped mankind so long? He

had never been taught that desire is the parthenogenetic parent of logic, the shaper of all intellectual decisions.

They swung aimlessly into the country club grounds, almost deserted this early in the afternoon. Up to the big billiard garret, the rough beams above, the window-seats in the gables, he took her.

"With a few more cushions——"

He lugged over an armful, and bent to nest them around her. The intangible sheath of the *lilas* surrounding her enwrapped him, mingled with the delicately acrid breath of her body, that unmistakable exhalation of feminine pores which summons the man as the drowsy odor of sweet clover draws the boisterous flight of the bee.

His throat choked, a tingling warmness washed throughout him.

"Don't . . . you're——" Provocative fingers pushed him back.

The conventional protest died away. He kissed her fiercely, with a passionate brutality strange to his experience. Her fervor matched his; she gave herself enough to increase his desire, yet withheld wilfully with that simulation of the chase which blows up the flame to its maddest height. At length, the racking storm quiescent for a moment, he knelt weakly beside her, spindrift battered by the inner surge of the tempest.

"I'm married," he parroted his earlier statement.

"I know——"

The stored-up frenzy shook him in restless helplessness, overcoming all restraints. "I'll leave Jane to-morrow, if you say. . . . Anything you want— There's nothing you can't have from me. Just say it—now— Hurt me some way——"

"I don't want to hurt you, you dear big silly boy. I love you."

He brought her head down until he could feel her parted teeth lightly touching his neck. "Hurt me . . . kill me. . . ."

An icy shiver of rapture gripped him as the tiny teeth tightened; as if the fangs of the serpent of forbidden love tentatively touched him, gloating in their power . . . saving him for further sacrifice.

"There. . . . Are you satisfied, Mr. Lover?"

Curbing the tumult in his blood, he drew up a chair and faced her. "I . . . we mustn't let this happen again, Louise *ma cherie*. Kisses . . . and all . . . I once said—do you remember?—are only the preludes to the finale of love. I am married; it won't hurt me; but you're—you're not."

Her hand rested lightly on his. "You aren't the first man who has . . . loved me. You needn't worry about . . . me."

Uncertainly his eyes searched the liquid deeps of hers. "Not the first? . . ."

She flushed unconsciously, returning his level look. Her words came slowly. "Why, no, inquisitive Mr. Lover. There was another man . . . we intended to marry . . . I'm glad, anyhow." The last three sentences came in soft haste; such frankness embarrassed her. She covered it, changing the theme. "It isn't fair to Jane——"

"Life isn't fair to any of us." His compelling gaze was put on to hide the fleeting emotion of inner timidity. "Where shall we . . ."

"Lydia Hasson isn't nearly as . . . careful as the Tollivers. They're away a lot . . ."

She readjusted the pillows swiftly, as steps and scraps of conversation floated up the hollow shaft of the circular stairway. "Hadn't we better go?"

The Hassons were not at home, when he called two nights later; but their car might roll up any minute. "This is tantalizing, heart-love," he complained.

"It's something to have you here, anyway," as she cuddled deeper into the wide couch-swing behind the ferns on the wide railing. "We must be careful. If Lydia suspected——" Expressive eyes capped the meaning.

Jane had the Cades in for dinner, the next night; when Pelham arrived from the office, Harvey was entertaining the women with a nasal rendition of Judge Roscoe Little's mannerisms while enunciating a decision for both sides at once. The lawyer's welcome contrasted with some hidden constraint beneath Jane's tempered greeting. Throughout the meal and the talk afterwards he sensed that something was wrong. He could not quite make out what it was; perhaps it lay in his imagination.

His wife swished quickly inside, as the guests chugged away, leaving him to rearrange the porch chairs and follow more slowly. Something was up, that was clear.

She sat at her living-room desk, a litter of letters hurriedly pulled out before her. At his entrance, she raised frosty eyes to his. Without words she observed him. Disquieted by the confident, almost hostile stare, he sat heavily, clutching a handy magazine from the fresh pile beneath the reading lamp.

She did not speak. He exhaled noisily, and turned to the opening story.

"I met Lane Cullom this afternoon," she began in a moment, her voice leveled and restrained.

"What did he have to say?"

"He told me about . . . about your driving with that Richard woman yesterday afternoon."

"Mmm. . . . Yes, she is a friend of Lane's. He introduced me, I believe."

Her eyes fired. "You said you were at strike headquarters."

"So I was, until I took a little run out Hazelton way. Then I came back and finished up my work," he lied recklessly.

"He saw you at Catawba. That's ten miles beyond Hazelton. . . . You didn't get back until midnight last night, Pelham."

"Why, I was here for supper! Then I had to go down town . . ."

"You were with Miss Richard again." She ventured a chance shot.

His jaw stiffened, the occasional look of childish petulance smoldering around his eyes. "What if I was? Do you expect me to be locked in by a keeper every night?"

"You never mentioned her . . . except meeting her."

His mind squirmed. "We have so much else to talk about."

She pushed the disorder of letters backward with a gesture of irritation. "It was a risk marrying you. Every one said so; you had been splendid with me, but before that—you told me yourself—you'd switched from this girl to that. . . . You had something up with 'Thea Meade, I never asked what. . . . And the girls while you were in college, Nellie Tolliver and the rest. I never minded them; that was before I knew you. But this. . . . Do you think I have no shame, even if you haven't?"

"What a lot of side about nothing! Here I merely meet a young lady, take her riding, drop by to see her—what's wrong in that?"

Her low, tense indictment went on, partly to herself. "I always promised myself that I wouldn't marry a

ladies' man. It isn't so much what you've done in this case, as the tendency," she continued illogically. "If everything was above-board, why didn't you tell me that you were with her yesterday afternoon and night?"

"Because it was my business, and not yours." His tones rose angrily. "Must I render an account to you for every minute of my time? Can't I have some self-respect left? Do you expect to keep me tied to your apron-strings all my life?"

"You needn't tell me, Pelham Judson, that you took her riding to show her the scenery. I know you better—by now. She made a few large eyes at you; you thought at once that you saw your soul-mate. Told her you were misunderstood at home, of course—that she could understand you." He failed completely to detect the scorn, intended to wither his defense.

"What if I did? It's true, isn't it? We get along finely on lots of things, Jane; but there are some things in which we can't agree."

"We both agree, I suppose, that the marriage agreement doesn't call for you to make love to other girls, when you are married to me. Of course, you kissed her——"

"What if I did?" His retort slipped from his lips too quickly; he wished at once that he had held it back. "There's surely no harm——"

"I won't dare hold up my head in her sight!"

"We're grown men and women, Jane. We're not old fogies. We realize, surely, that love can't be bought and sold, to be locked up forever in a marriage license. Love must be free; and when it comes——"

"You can have your 'love' as free as you wish, Pelham. Only, count me out of it." She rose, the commotion stirred by her quick motion setting the loose sheets flying, drifting to the new carpet they had been so proud

of a week ago. Furious, she stooped to pick them up, her ire mounting as the unexpected enormity of his conduct became apparent.

"You talk like a fool, Jane. I haven't done anything——"

"I'll tell you what you've done. You've let a passing fancy for a woman make you forget that you're my husband. I won't share you with another woman, even if she will."

"Why, last night, when I came home, you were as loving——"

Her glance bayoneted him. "I've told you before of that Allie Durfield, the poor girl who'd ended up on Butler's Avenue. I've told you the bitterness with which she said, 'You engaged girls cause us the trouble. After your man's spent an evening with you, we pay for it.' I didn't understand her then; I do now. You spend the evening with this woman, then come home . . . you call me loving! I wonder you can look me in the face!"

"You exaggerate everything, as usual. We haven't done a thing——"

"You've kissed her."

"That was nothing."

"It's this much. Either you give me your word now that you will not see her again, or—see only her . . . and whoever else your fancy dictates. I'm through. I'll go back to Mrs. Anderson's and let you . . . let you . . ." Her voice broke; she tumbled weakly, weeping and distraught, against the couch.

He was at her side in an instant. She rose, flinging the tears flying. "Keep away! How *dare* you touch me! I suppose you thought I'd cry and make up? . . . Will you give me your word?" There was a plaintive affection even through the sternness. "Dearest, we can't have our marriage on a rotten foundation."

He fumed to the front door and back, the discarded magazine rustling unnoticed upon the scattered letters. "I'll do anything in reason, Jane. But this is unreasonable, and you know it. You mustn't carry your penchant for running away from situations too far." She flushed at the reference. "I'll agree, of course, not to be unfaithful; but you can't choose whom I may and may not speak to. Common decency—— It's ridiculous."

"We can't have a half-way marriage. This has gone too far. . . . Make your choice. You can't burn both ends of your candle. . . ."

"Anything within reason, Jane."

"You'll promise, then?"

"No." The cruel monosyllable crushed the joy rising in her voice. "It's too ridiculous," he repeated.

There was a dangerous hush in her voice. "You understand the alternative? I leave to-morrow."

"If you're bound to be foolish, I can't stop you. I won't force you to stay here."

"I should say not!"

"You'll come to your senses soon enough. A good night's sleep will cure your tantrum."

Casually he jerked a match against the sole of his shoe. The sputtering head spun smokily into the carpet. He stamped it out, and lit another. Shielding the flame from the night breeze, he relit his pipe. When he looked up, she had left the room.

He knocked considerately on her door at breakfast time. A muffled voice told him that she had a headache, and was not coming out. Well, if she was going to act that way! She was bound to see the matter more reasonably. Probably she was ashamed now to admit that she had been wrong.

He was glad that he had only admitted one kiss. . . .

Disturbed at the thought of the unfinished quarrel, he

ran out unannounced to the house for lunch. Voluble Lily, her eyes rolling, informed him that Miss' Jane had left an hour before, and that her trunk had gone too. "An' she said dat you'ud know whar she had gone, Mr. Judson."

"That's all right, Lily. You needn't have supper for me to-night."

Angry with himself, with the inquisitive negro, with the fascination of Louise, which had precipitated this, most of all with headstrong Jane, he shot past the traffic policeman into the swirl of the city. He would show his wife that she couldn't keep him under her little finger!

XXV

THE next day began the trial of Ed Cole, for the killing of John Dawson. Militia, equipped by profits from the mountain's wealth, guarded the courthouse; the strikers, realizing that their salvation lay in preventing an armed clash, ignored the provocative slurs and taunts of these guardians of order; but the glint of guns followed wherever they were, a continuing menace. Ben Spence had finally twisted a half-hearted consent from the county prosecutor to let him act with the State. "But they double-cross me every chance they get, Judson," he said as they walked to the county courthouse together. "That young Chippen, who is about as much of a lawyer as I am a South Sea Islander, is to handle the State's case—the youngest and poorest hanger-on around the county attorney's office. And against him, Dick Mabry, *and* Hilary, Leach, Pugh and Garfunkel!"

"They're a good criminal firm——"

"Best in the South. Darned fools, three of them; Tipton Leach is a lawyer. Darned crooks, all four. The company will do anything to get the nigger off. And 'Willy' Hawkes, Tuttle's old partner, holds this term!"

Spence took his seat beside Chippen, Pelham with a row of socialists just behind. Judge Hawkes entered with his usual nervous jerk, twitching his apologetic way to the raised bench. Richard Mabry, smiling in velvety assurance, bowed ostentatiously to His Honor; the defendant's table was otherwise empty. Deputies escorted in the negro, his face bright with a frightened

interest, mixed with delight at his sudden importance, and confidence in the last whispered instructions of his lawyers, given half an hour before. The court-room filled rapidly; there was an uneasy rustle, a half-restrained chatter.

"Is the State ready to proceed?" came the case-weary accents from the bench.

"We are ready." Chippen's young voice wobbled uncertainly.

"The defendant ready?"

"If the Court please," in Mabry's meticulous accents, "my colleagues—in a moment——"

The judge leaned back, closing his eyes.

A sudden hush at the door. A stretching of necks from all the fringes of the room. Walking daintily, with a glaze of dignity which never lost its underwash of the furtive, came Meyer Garfunkel, youngest of the firm. Spence leaned forward to Pelham. "Biggest crook in six states! Does all their dirtiest jobs. . . . They always come in this way; it impresses the courthouse crowd."

The door swung again; a succession of breathless "There he is!"-es, as Colonel Lysander G. Pugh stamped heavily in, with his invariable atmosphere of busied haste, bowing affably left and right, his weathered broad-brim clutched beside his brief case.

Another shifting of interest. Tipton Leach, narrow-eyed, a permanent sneer around his mouth, walking slowly, speculatively. "He is the brains," continued Spence. "The corporations fear him like sin, in damage cases. He bleeds them and his clients indiscriminately. But he knows more law than all the local bench."

Last of all, preceded by his law clerk, Zebulun Hilary himself, his little red face, under the thinned mop of white hair, sticking out of his wide collar like a turtle's.

"Over eighty, and indestructible! Even his conscience is asbestos."

There was a leisurely deliberation among the five counsel for the defendant. Five heads came together, five brains bent their scheming toward freeing the accused negro, ten eyes quivered with satisfaction at the prospect.

"Defendant ready?" The jaded judge roused himself to make this interjection.

Colonel Pugh rose in sallow majesty, his vulture eye sweeping the front half of the room in indiscriminate defiance of the court, the State, and, if necessary, the whole United States. Catch Lysander G. Pugh unready? Impossible! In precise affability his round tones rolled out. "The defendant is ready, if it please Your Honor." He sat down in complacent vindication.

An irrepressible ripple of appreciation quivered through the place. Here was a lawyer who knew how to law!

The plea of "not guilty" was entered; the panel of talesmen called from the jury room.

Spence leaned over to Pelham again. "First case since the Whitney scandal when all four have appeared together. They have the perfect system, Judson. Garfunkel does the second-story work; Leach knows enough law for all four of them; Zeb Hilary and Colonel Pugh get the business. They belong to everything—there isn't a lodge of any kind that they don't flock to. These two go into every political fight, one on one side, one on the other; they get 'em coming and going. It'll be a treat to hear them address the jury." He closed his eyes expressively. "Whew!"

Two men lounged in from the clerk's office and took their places at the defendant's table, as the selection of the jury began. Pelham watched their activity in be-

wilderment; as each name was called, they bent over long lists, and consulted with the lawyers while the talesmen were being examined. He noticed the deference with which their whispers were received.

At the first chance, he spoke to Spence again. "Who are those—more lawyers?"

Ben flashed him a sudden glance. "Don't you know 'Chicory' Jasper, and Bill Letcher? They're two of the company's 'jury strikers'—'jury fixers.' They have the dope on each man; interview them in advance, and all. If a man's ever said anything against a corporation, off he goes."

"But is that . . . legal?"

"Supreme Court has ruled that it is." He turned back, to insist on Chippen's challenging a venireman who had worked in the company's office before getting state employment.

Three panels were exhausted, before twelve good men and true could be found who knew, Pelham judged from their answers, nothing whatever about unions or strikes; who had never heard of this strike; who did not read the papers. Eight were farmers from distant edges of the county, one was a bookkeeper as anemic as prosecutor Chippen himself, two were small business men, and the last a nondescript nonagenarian who called himself a "watchman."

Once the jury was chosen, the trial went swiftly enough. The State called the policemen, and made out a prima facie case against the negro. In answer to old Hilary's glib questions, the officers confessed that the negro had claimed self-defense; that Dawson's discarded pistol had an indented shell in it. McGue's evidence as to the fake telephone call helped; but the case for the State could have been stronger.

The defense evidently intended to take no risks. First

they put on several of those present at the mass meeting when Dawson had denounced the negro, sympathizers with the *Voice of Labor* machine. Invariably these swore to the big strike leader's unreasonable anger against the expelled member. The radical union men in the room could hardly be restrained from hissing; but the testimony went in, and, Pelham noted, Spence's attack lacked some of his usual vigor. At last Cole himself was called. He gave his evidence with that easy circumspection that told to the initiated that he had been thoroughly coached. Nor could cross-examination twist any of his statements.

In rebuttal several of the sincerer strikers were put on; but this last minute recourse did not impress the jury.

The final speeches for the defense were masterly. Colonel Pugh led off, and in vulture-like gyrations pictured the incursion of this carpet-bagger from the North who had thrown good Adamsville men out of their jobs, and damaged all the business of the district; of his senseless persecution of this negro; of Cole's loyalty to the miners' union, and the death of his brothers on the mountain; and finally, of the negro's own act, a simple defense of the life which God gave him.

"They claim that this defendant received a bribe from a man then an ex-employee of the company. Who says so? One John McGue, who admits he is now under indictment in connection with this strike. There is no corroboration; Cole denies it, Jim Hewin, a deputy sheriff, denies it. Believe a jail bird against two witnesses like that? Why, they cannot even invent a motive to account for the fictitious presence of this fictitious money! . . .

"Are we to have it written down forever in the annals

of Adamsville that a black man comes into our courts, and does not get justice? Will you make Ed Cole swing because of the color which his Creator imposed on him? Will you gentlemen be connivers at the legal lynching of an innocent man? Will your decision be that a white scoundrel can attempt to murder a negro, and that the negro must die for a man's first duty, self-protection?"

He ended with oratorical sky-rockets, and sank, seemingly exhausted, into the considerate arms of his legal twin brethren, Garfunkel and Leach.

Spence came next. When he reached the cause of the strike, his words rang convincingly; but the jury were unsympathetic to this. As he proceeded to the case before him, he tried to tear the careful web of evidence which backed up the negro's claim; the talesmen seemed impressed.

Zebulun Hilary's concluding speech for the negro found him in his most telling mood. He had been a leading pleader at the bar sixty years before; and the momentum of that stretch of time had multiplied his powers of persuasion until even Pelham had to confess his weird mastery of the emotions of men. He riddled the case for the State; there was no evidence to contradict the defendant's candid story. He pictured the desolate Cole home, now sought to be robbed of its last bread-winner; he wrung the hearts and the consciences of each juryman with powerful emotional onslaughts. When he finished, an acquittal, unless the last speaker could change the trend, seemed inevitable.

Chippen's lame summing up only made the case worse for the memory of John Dawson.

Pelham went out into the sunlight, Harvey Cade joining him. "It's sheer mockery of justice," came the law-

yer's outraged outburst. "Lies, lies, lies! And Ben Spence soldiering on the job. . . . He represents the official union movement, remember."

"You don't think he would——" Pelham's honest horror was written all over his face.

"He could have done better. As for that Chippen, it's the rare case where he's smart enough to know that a 'not guilty' will help him more than a conviction. This is justice—in Adamsville!"

"And always so bad?"

"Why, our Supreme Court," went on the other bitterly, "has granted a new trial, because the letter 's' was left off the word 'defendants,' and again because an 'i' was omitted from 'malice.' In another case, where the indictment charged that 'A did embezzle from B his money,' the case was reversed, because the Court could not determine who the 'his' referred to. 'To make it refer to B,' said the learned court, 'would imply that the Grand Jury intended to charge A with a crime.' What an implication! . . . A leading magazine recently said that the criminal administration in this state is more scandalous than in any state in the union. It's unspeakable!"

The first edition of the *Register* was hot with headlines promising war. Pelham took a copy back to his desk in the Charities' Building, and, after navigating through excited cables of submarine sinkings, and profound announcements from minor Washington officials, found the brief mention of the local case. The jury had rendered the expected verdict of acquittal, after being out less than half an hour.

Pelham fumbled away the afternoon at his desk, self-disgusted and dispirited. The country was being sucked into the red whirlpool of war—a self-inflicted wounding of the white race amounting almost to race suicide.

Labor everywhere had fought, before the conflict, to prevent its coming; but it was inherent in the spread of world-wide capitalism. Prussian militarism was a hateful contributing factor; but, if the Germans had been merely imperialists like the British, the conflict would have come just the same: labor's dumb impotence prevented the one saving force from effective prevention. The German socialists had been traitors to the international, except for scattered heroes like Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg; long local schooling in servitude had been too strong. The Allied comrades had not been much better, despite the facts that the British Labor Party promised continued agitation, and Italy and France were hopeful. Russia alone seemed firm: although the amazing news of the March Revolution had been followed by information that the new government contained more bourgeois than revolutionary elements. . . .

And now the United States would come in. There would be defections among the socialists, of course; but Pelham prayed that the mass of the movement would stand untouched. "I'll stick," he muttered to himself. "If I'm alone. . . . But it won't be that bad."

His mind turned to the local situation. There was hope still, in the nucleus of fighting strikers—this latest judicial outrage would only increase their determination to defeat the company. But the election . . . the death of Dawson . . . the militia . . . this decision . . . Jane's leaving. . . . Things were in a mess.

Most bitterly of all he felt the strike situation. This conflict with his father had called out all the fighting vigor in his blood; win that, and he would have achieved something. . . . If only his mother could have seen the justice of the strikers' side, and come with him! That would have been a happy household, just he and his dear mother; no uncertain-tongued Jane, to scold at him for

nothing, and embarrass his tangled affairs still further by leaving him without any cause,—certainly without any cause that she knew of. She was utterly unlike his mother, his turbulent wrath told him; cold, unsympathetic, un-understanding. . . . Sweet in a way, but not what he needed. . . .

Well, he would see Louise to-night.

XXVI

ON the way to the Hassons', he sought to solve the tangle of his domestic affairs.

He could not quite account for the errant streak in his blood, that drove him so joyfully toward the soft arms awaiting him. Surely he had an overplus of idealism. . . . Perhaps this was a part of it: of his endless search for perfection in woman . . . for some woman, say, who held the magnificent sweetness his mother had received as the dear Barbour heritage. Louise had something of the understanding mother-spirit, that was the mountain's, that was his own mother's. And in turn the mountain wildness coursed in his blood; these had been his emotions, before he became its prodigal child.

The girl met him at the door, wide-eyed, a little wistful. "Well, Mr. Lover, you did come! Yesterday was lonely. . . . I have bad news; the folks have changed their plans; they'll be back, to-night. . . . We can take a ride, though."

His smiling lips straightened, but there was a dancing glow in his eyes. "Get your coat, girl," he said with affectionate curtness.

He turned from Highland Boulevard, the glitter of its lights reflected in the suave luster of the rain-damp pavement, into quieter, less-lighted Haviland Avenue. Into a darkened garage ran the car. Her eyes queried his. He pressed off the lights.

Over the cropped grass to the stone steps; inside the darkened porch he pulled out his keys, opened the door, led into the expectant hallway.

"Your . . . home?"

"Jane is away," he said briefly.

The shades were pulled down carefully, a light lit. She sat, her eyes wide, on the hall couch, adjusting her skirts in the light. The dull gray paper brought out all of her ripe rosy loveliness; he paused, struck by the picture. . . . It was the couch on which he had last seen Jane sitting; a sardonic inner smile disturbed him.

"I don't feel that this is right, Pell—in her house——" Her deep eyes puckered in uncertainty.

Dominant lips closed her protest; she rested for a fleeting moment against him.

On the steps' landing he paused to point out tennis trophies gleaming against the dark woodwork.

Then they turned again, hand in hand, up the carpeted rounds to the dim silence above. . . .

Before midnight he told her good-bye on the Hasson porch.

There were times, in the two weeks which followed, when Pelham viewed himself from without, with a definite disgust; when he realized that a furtive fraction of love could never make up for the big gap caused in the day's doings by the absence of Jane. Once Louise had to tease him out of this mood.

"I'm leaving you, Mr. Lover, on Wednesday. . . . Make my last three days pleasant."

He took her to the station. As they entered it, two cars disgorged another increment of the militia.

He rode to the first stop with her.

"You were a good lover," was her final praise. "Run down to the coast and see me sometime. . . . If you still want me."

XXVII

IT was just after ten, in the dry heat of a July day six weeks later, when four of the deputies appeared on the road at the entrance to the miners' shack village, and started to enter. They were backed by a squad of the new Home Guard, who had come to help out the militia, now in process of gradual federalization.

"What d'ye want?" called out John McGue, the only committeeman at the moment in the informal town. Pelham, Joe Mullins, the new national organizer, and a committee were visiting the governor, to protest against two exceptionally brutal clubbings by the restlessly inactive guards. It was a hopeless trip, except as a protest.

"You hold things down, McGue," Mullins had told him. "It's coming, by God! They'll consent to arbitrate before the middle of August, or the federal government'll step in! Four new camps, man, in three weeks —they can't get any more men, either, for love or money. We've got 'em!"

Things were looking serious for the company. The Ed Cole verdict had reacted against it; defections from the ranks of the strike-breakers were frequent, and the output was hardly a third of that of the summer before the strike.

McGue wondered if the visit of the guards and militiamen had been timed to fit in with the absence of most of the strike leaders in Jackson. "What d'ye want?" he repeated.

"We got warrants for six men." The deputy—it was Huggins—started to walk on in; McGue kept his place.

"Get out of the way, there," Huggins warned him shortly.

"Gimme the names; we'll git the men fer you. No need to go trampling through people's houses and gardens, as you guards did last week."

"I'll give you nothin'."

The voices in dispute resounded down the vacant roads. Men, hungry men, their natures warped with the long unequal struggle, massed in a shifting background behind the rugged committeeman.

"Get out of my way, or I'll jug you too."

Silently McGue stepped aside. The crowd flattened back against the flimsy walls. The armed guards, grinning at one another, jostling and joking, penetrated deeper and deeper into the straggly irregularity of the settlement.

All at once Huggins caught sight of an undergrown, misshapen boy scowling from the back of the men and women. Pushing them aside, he shoved to the spot, the guards close behind. His hand gripped the boy's arm, until he winced.

"Hey—whatcher——"

"What's your name?"

"Aw, you lemme 'lone! I ain't done a thing."

"Take him, there." He shook the boy savagely. "Your name's McGuire, ain't it? Frank McGuire—I know you."

McGue came up again, holding in his irritation. "What do you want this boy for?"

"None of your damn' business! We got a warrant for him, see? You keep out, or——"

Several of the deputies in the rear clicked their hammers suggestively, snickering at the one-sided joke. A

disturbed buzz wavered up and down the massed strikers. As Huggins turned up the wider road again, it grew in volume into a subdued stream of boohs, catcalls, hisses, low threats. He turned incautiously, facing them.

"Don't you follow me, you gutter trash, or I'll jug the lot of you!"

A weak satiric voice came from behind a house. "Aw, will you, though!"

McGue's eyes grinned; but his face remained set, as he doggedly kept pace with the head of the marching guards.

Two more men were taken in the same methodical fashion. The surging procession was now near the open center of the location, where a square had been left as a common, with the artesian well at one end.

Girls and women quietly replaced the men in the front line, jeering and cursing at the flushed faces of the soldiers, occasionally stumbling awkwardly against them. There was a scream as a soldier turned suddenly on a pretty red-haired girl, and caught her wrist. An old Irish virago beside clutched his shoulder and flung him sideways.

"Touch my daughter, you dirty bastard, and I'll tear your heart out!"

Huggins re-formed his men at the entrance to the square. There were only fifty soldiers in line; there were already several hundred of the tenters, and their number swelled constantly. Of course, they couldn't do anything. . . . He had his orders.

The stage was set for trouble. Over the heads of the women and girls, from the shelter of the nearest house, a rock whished—an apple-sized ore boulder from the iron heart of the hill. It crunched into one of the guards, square on his cheek. He grunted. An uncertain hand patted his dazed face. When he drew it away, it was

smeared with blood; the stain widened over his collar and breast.

A second stone came from the opposite side. Then another . . . another. . . .

Two deputies fired wildly in the direction of the hidden throwers.

Out of the dissolving panorama of frightened strikers came a spurted crack, a spit of smoke. One of the deputies screamed, was supported, writhing terribly, by the men on either side of him. His head hung limp.

"Back to that building, there," boomed Huggins, pointing to the distributing store at the mountain end of the square.

The retreat began. The strikers eddied backward from the cleared place. From houses along the way unexpected bursts of rocks, an occasional shot, crashed into the close ranks of the law-enforcers.

Four or five revolvers puffed off to the left. A guard dropped his gun, shaking his hand in agony. The left third of the soldiers at a command raised their rifles, and blazed away at the infuriated welter of retreating humanity. A madhouse of screams, men and women running, two bodies settling onto the stained July grass. . . .

Another volley, this toward the right.

"Take that, you——" screamed a deputy, as the startled face at a window was met by the blaze of a rifle. The woman hung swaying over the ledge; choking horribly, she trembled further and further out, dropped hideously upon the ground.

At the storehouse now. "Hey, you, get out of that," Huggins commanded the strikers' distributors.

"This is our——"

The sight of the rifles settled the matter. The two dead guards were stretched on the floor, the wounded

were roughly bandaged. Huggins phoned the facts to the militia headquarters on the mountain.

"Said for us to wait here," he explained to the army lieutenant in charge. "It 'ud be suicide, trying to get out. For all we know, all them houses is full of strikers. There'll be two companies here inside of an hour. By God, we'll do for 'em this time!" His tone shook in fierce rapture—the man hunt was on!

The main bulk of the rifles covered the big open field in front; small parties watched toward west, south and north, to warn if any activity showed in the houses fifty feet away.

There was no water; the wounded cursed continually for it. Huggins sent a party, well protected, over to the well, seventy feet away, to bring back two bucketfuls. One of the detail was shot in the collar bone, but managed to make his way back with the bearers of the precious drink.

There was a shouting from in front. "Hey," came a voice, waving a white towel raised high on a clothespole. "Can we talk with your man in charge?"

It was Edward McGuire, the father of little humpbacked Frank, who had been arrested, but had slipped away in the disorderly retreat to the store. He had been selected as one of the older, more law-abiding of the miners, to bring the flag of truce.

"What d'ye want?" Huggins demanded belligerently. "Ain't no use to talk; I got a regiment comin' in half an hour, will clean up this whole damned nest of rats."

"Can I come closer?" called McGuire.

There was no answer. He came over to where the lieutenant of the guard stood, clutching the pole with its white symbol high above his head.

"Well?"

"Can we pick up those bodies out on the field? You can get any of your men there. We'll carry this flag, sir —one of 'em 's my son, I think."

The deputy beside Huggins stepped two feet forward. His revolver reversed, he brought it down with all his force on the undefended grizzled head. McGuire dropped in a heap.

All the while, down the dusty July road, Major Grinnell, of the State Guards, had double-quicked his men. They reached the railroad spur just out of sight of the shack village. Here he divided his force. The company automobiles, equipped with searchlights and machine guns, had gone by the county road to the eastern end of the colony, behind the sand ridge, to cut off possible retreat. The motley mass of deputies, mine guards and special police cut in after them, to work back with the machines. The militia marched above the camp, close to the store held by Huggins. After a fifteen minutes' wait, they proceeded in open formation, converging toward the common.

The strikers, stunned by the brutal killing of McGuire, swirled together beyond the well, hidden by the jerry-built shacks.

"We gotter rush 'em," "Micky" Ray insisted, weaving in and out of the perturbed herd, followed by several adherents as violent. "Damn it, why doncher rush 'em, before they sneak out?"

McGue confronted him again. "Still at it, you fool? They'd shoot us down like dogs——"

"They'll shoot us anyway. 'Fraid of 'em, are you, Johnny?" another taunted.

"We gotter rush 'em. Get your guns ready," commanded Ray. "All that aren't afraid, line up behind Bill there."

He turned his back to round up others. The line

doubled on him, an excited commotion shaking it. He tried to break his way clear, to understand what they were saying.

"What the——"

"Aincher heard her?"

"Nellie seed 'em!"

"All the soldiers is come! They're right behind the store!"

"They're everywhere!"

"You see?" stormed McGue, shoving Ray to the side. "Everybody below the common."

They made the change. The militia assembled before the storehouse, extended their wings, beat down the open space and the lanes parallel with it. Undetermined, the strikers waited, poorly armed, but sheltered behind friendly walls.

Huggins' big voice came faintly. "Lay down your guns," he shouted. "The first man who shoots, we'll fire. Do you surrender?"

There was no answer.

"We'd better," insisted McGue, perspiring from heat and excitement. "They ain't got anything on us. You can't fight rifles with bare hands."

"Hell, no! You saw what they did to Ed McGuire. Let's kill the uglies——"

"Kill 'em!" Ray adopted a new slogan. "Kill 'em! Kill 'em, I says."

They wavered. The blistering sun beat fiercely on the metallic barrels of the menacing rifles.

A dreadful tumult of shots, shouts, indescribable noises, broke out in the rear. The shuddering sound of machine guns pelted whistling hail through the sparse tree leaves above.

Out of the blind turmoil came running figures, blaspheming in horrible rage. "They're there too!"

"It's another regiment!"

"They're killing everybody!"

The noise grew louder.

Major Grinnell halted at the head of his men. McGue, surrounded by a cowed hundred of the strikers, walked quietly out. "Do you want to arrest us?"

Methodically the houses and alleys were combed, until close to five hundred men, women and children had been herded into the trampled square. One by one they were marched before the guards and deputies; a hundred and nine were pointed out largely at random, as having had some part in the attack. The rest who were involved had slipped away between the two lines of attackers. Wailing and lamenting, the former were herded away into the overcrowded jails.

That night the militia encamped in the remains of the settlement. Fire had destroyed the western third of the houses, a fire which the soldiers made no attempt to put out.

Not a striker was permitted to enter the barred area.

Jim Hewin, back on duty as a sheriff's deputy, led one of the squads that scoured the surrounding woods the next morning for fugitives and bodies. "Hey, 'Red,'—they pipped somebody here," he explained.

It was the rocky road behind the settlement, which led above the wet-weather falls of the brook that eased away into Shadow Creek. The oasis of grass in the middle of the sandy road was darkly muddied by a mixture of dirt and blood. A cap, crumpled, the visor torn loose, lay in the clawed sand beside it.

"Red" Jones ran up. Hewin's quick eyes zigzagged eagerly. "Look, 'Red'—he went here!"

The trail of blood began again a few feet beyond the road. A heavy body had been dragged over succulent pokeberry plants: moist pithy leaves swung crushed, ooz-

ing their thick sap; dark berries lay mashed upon a soil purple with their blood.

They parted the sumach and haw bushes screening the falls.

The slimed slope of gray rocks was darkened by a muddy reddish trickle of water. It was a broken stretch of seventy feet to the green stagnancy below.

"Hey, 'Red'——" Jim's voice dropped; his shaking hand pointed to an awkward mass half way down the incline.

They slid cautiously, clutching the rough crag edges beside the water.

Caught in one of the shelf-flaws of the rock, his miner's shirt coagulated with blackened blood, his stained overalls soggy with the water, lay a dead negro.

Hewin turned the body over; his fingers shrank and slipped at the moist unpleasantness.

They peered into the dead face of Ed Cole. A clinging mould of leaves half obscured the deputy's badge on his greasy lapel.

Jim's eyes expanded. "Cole, you know—he shot John Dawson."

They regarded the face for a few minutes.

"Got any terbaccer, Jim?"

"Red" lit up his pipe.

"Guess we'll tote 'im back—down that way, huh?"

The dank and dripping bundle was carried and dragged through the scratching underbrush. When they reached the road at last, they rested it on a scaly-bark's littered knees.

Jim rubbed the sweat off from his forehead with his soaked sleeves. "Hell, he's heavy, ain't he? This'll do. . . . You see Huggins; he'll send a wagon." His hands pushed throughout his trousers pockets. "Did you gimme them matches back?"

XXVIII

GOVERNOR TENNANT—his pet name among friends and enemies alike was "Whiskey-barrel Tennant"—dismissed the committee with a few curt platitudes about law and order. When they reached Adamsville, they found the shack colony sacked, the strikers and their dependents either jailed or scattered. The militia had done a thorough job.

Wearily Pelham dragged himself to the meeting at Arlington Hall.

Jack Bowden, of the local miners' organization, who always came like a bird of carrion at evil news, secured the floor, and moved that the strike committee be discharged and the strike settled on whatever terms could be secured. "They've bashed in our heads," he said vigorously, "Do we want 'em to cut our throats as well?"

There was no John Dawson to reply to him. From many groups of the strikers came discouraged support for the motion. Most of the old tried unionists saw nothing to be gained in wasting energy on a dead struggle.

"Makes mighty little difference now," Pelham whispered hopelessly to Serrano, seated in explosive agitation beside him.

"*You'll* never quit!"

"Not quit. . . . But start a newer fight, with some chance of winning it."

One violent industrial unionist demanded the floor,

and pounded out that the strike must continue, with a general tie-up of every trade, organized and unorganized, in Adamsville.

"One big union!" he continued to shout, even after the ready ushers had pushed him into his seat.

"That's the sort of fool advice," Jack Bowden said, "that's lost this strike. For it is lost; and I'll tell you who's lost it. Not the company, nor Paul Judson's money, not his murdering gunmen; but——" and his lean arm pointed straight to Pelham, "but crazy radicals in and out of the union movement; lounge Socialists, lemonade trade-unionists, men who claim to be with us, but were born with scab hearts. It's them and their kind have led to this smash-up. And the sooner we reckernize it, the better!"

There was a tossing roar of applause at this. The crowd, Pelham grasped at once, was ready to quit, and only wanted someone to blame for the failure.

Nils Jensen, still under bond pending the decision of his case by the Supreme Court, answered the charge at once. "Men, brothers," his voice rang out, "I've been a miner, and a member of this local, for thirteen years. I don't know who is to blame, but I know who isn't—and that's the Socialists among us. We've fought, in the union and at the polls, day in, day out, while your old-fashioned unionists have been pulling down fat jobs under Democratic sheriffs,——" a hit at Pooley, who had been first deputy under the previous official. "I'm not in favor of going on now, if the crowd's ready to stop. I can get work, here or somewhere else, in or out of jail,——" There was a friendly smile at this. "I know that the war between our class and the Paul Judson class will go on until classes are ended. If you're to blame anybody, blame ignorant laborers, who can't see that scabbing against their fellows cuts their own

throats, and betrays their wives and children. Blame the labor fakers, the crooked bunch who 'lead' you so that their pockets are lined for delivering your votes to the old parties, while you get nothing. And when Jack Bowden says that Comrade Pelham Judson, as good a socialist as any one of us, is a lounging lemonade socialist, with a scab heart, he lies, and he knows he lies!"

The chair's rappings were lost in the outcries. "Order!" "Order!" broke all over the hall. An uproar circled around Jensen and also Bowden; for a minute the meeting threatened to break into a riot.

Jack Bowden jumped up to the platform, a document waving over his head. "Brothers! . . . Brothers! . . . Let me answer him!" He paused, while they quieted. "I'll answer him. When I moved that the committee be discharged without thanks, I knew what I was doing. When I charged that 'Mister'" (with an ugly sneer) "Pelham Judson, son of the vice-president of the Birrell-Florence-Mountain Iron and Steel Company, was born with a scab heart, I knew what I was doing!"

Cries of "Shame!" "Shame!" "Throw him out!"

He kept his place. As he waved the mysterious document before their faces, the cries weakened; curiosity hushed them.

"One member of that committee, a man who had no right on it, for he had no union card——"

"As Paul Judson has!" Jensen cut in sharply, amid indignant demands to keep quiet.

"One member of that committee has been—a scab! As he may be a scab again, when he pleases to. I have here," he opened the paper, so that the large red seals were displayed to all, "—affidavits from Connecticut, proving that 'Mister' Pelham Judson, 'Comrade' Judson if brother Jensen wants to call him that, in October, 1913, in New Haven, acted as a scab during a strike of con-

ductors and motormen on the New Haven Electric Company, and helped to break that strike. He's kept quiet about it; I can't. And I say that such a man should be kicked out of all affiliation with the labor movement, here or elsewhere!"

"It's not true," shrieked Jensen and a score of fervid socialists. One brawny Norwegian started for the platform. "I'll tear out dat dam' liar's tongue." The sergeant-at-arms pulled him back.

Pelham rose, pale and trembling.

The chair picked him out. "Does brother Judson desire the floor?"

There was an intent silence, as he stood, alone, surrounded by the hostile hundreds of the men and women he had fought for. He tried to begin.

Bowden walked across the platform, toward him. "Is it true, or not?"

Pelham's swollen tongue licked his lips. At length he spoke, quietly, yet so penetratingly that every syllable reached his audience. "I can explain——" he began.

"Is it true?" Bowden led the demand of hundreds of angered throats.

He faced them unflinchingly. "It is true. I can explain——"

The hooting and jeering broke with savage, almost bestial fury. Doggedly Pelham kept to his feet, in spite of the efforts of Serrano and others to drag him down. "This is terrible, comrade," whispered Serrano. "You'd better leave——"

At length Bowden got the eye of the chair again. "I move that we give five minutes to Mr. Judson to 'explain', as he calls it, his scabbing."

In simple language Pelham told of his training in a home dedicated to the fight against labor; of his acts at New Haven, while a college student; of his conversion to

socialism and the cause of labor. He did not mention what it had cost him; a few remembered this. When he came to his New Haven experiences, the hissing began, swelled in volume. All of the chair's entreaties could not stop it.

"If you think, comrades, that my usefulness on this committee is over, I hereby resign. But I can assure you that nothing will shake my efforts in the cause for which I have fought, am fighting, and will continue to fight."

No eloquence could have moved them. The mass psychology of the meeting demanded a victim; here was one before them. The shrivelling strike months of turmoil and undernourishment had thrown them back into a lower, more barbarous state; their sense of justice was perverted from ultimate social equality and order into a primitive condemnation of the accursed thing that had brought them into this predicament. They were only too ready to throw a Jonah to the deep, as an expiatory sacrifice to the omnipotent god who doled out bi-weekly pay-envelopes. They were in a starving panic to get back to the skimpy flesh-pots of a darker Egypt.

It was moved and seconded that the resignation be accepted. An earburst of "ayes" were for the proposition; one or two scattering voices registered weak negatives.

"The motion is carried."

The sudden blow had crushed all opposition. The resolutions to end the strike were accepted without debate.

Jack Bowden, highly satisfied with the night's work, went over to the state office with Bob Bivens and John Pooley. "Reckon I better destroy that?" he grinned, handing a letter out to the big State president.

It was from Henry Tuttle, on the company's legal

stationery, enclosing the affidavits relating to Pelham's activities in the New Haven strike.

The letter was burned, the ashes scattered.

The next afternoon's *Register* informed Pelham of the company's terms, which were to take back all except the ringleaders, some twenty in number—he noticed the names of Jensen and the committeemen heading it—at the old rate, with an agreement from each man binding him not to join the union. The strikers under arrest, continued the account, would be discharged in all probability, except in cases of serious nature.

The same paper contained the sparse outline of another story, which Pelham read with a growing horror.

At three-thirty the previous afternoon, an old man had entered the mining company's office, and asked for Paul Judson.

"What name?"

His watery blue eyes danced peculiarly beneath stringy white hair. "He doesn't know me. It's important."

"We must have your name."

Fumbling first on one foot, then the other, he eyed the uninterested clerk closely. At length he made up his mind. "My name is Duckworth—Christopher Duckworth, tell him. I've come about the settlement of the strike."

She marked down the name, snapping to the drawer. "He's out of town to-day."

"When does he return?"

"Maybe late this evening . . . maybe not until to-morrow."

Suspicious old eyes searched her face. "Sure he isn't in?"

"I told you once, didn't I?"

"He may return to-day?"

"Maybe."

"I'll wait."

Passers in and out of the offices remembered his shoving a paper hurriedly into his pocket as they neared.

About an hour later, when the information clerk left for a few minutes, he rose, and started to open the door marked "Paul Judson: Private."

"Where you going?" an accounting clerk demanded, watching his unusual movements.

"Mr. Judson wants to see me."

"He isn't there."

He caught the old man roughly by the arm, as he tried to push past.

The enfeebled socialist retreated to the center of the room.

"Give him this," his quavering tones insisted, pushing a piece of paper into surprised hands.

The clerk looked up hurriedly, some warning of the unexpected, the dangerous, reaching him. His eyes caught the rusty glint of metal.

He jumped. At the same moment, the roar of the shot rattled the windows, acrid smoke swirled throughout the room, the old man's legs buckled up. He fell quietly to the floor; his shoes scraped the flooring once. He lay still.

The clerk read the note aloud, after the morgue had been phoned, and the body covered.

"To Paul Judson:

> "This act is my punishment, for living on the earth your presence scars; a just God will punish you in another world.
>
> "This act will bring home to your conscience your responsibility for murder:

"Murder of twenty-three miners in the mine explosion;

"Murder of John Dawson, and fifty innocent strikers, by the guns of your gunmen;

"Murder of your guards by your own acts;

"Murder of the bodies, hearts and souls of starving strikers. Murder of good in all people. Murder of justice in your courts.

"Murder of me, as a warning of what you deserve.

"CHRISTOPHER DUCKWORTH."

"Can you beat it?" the clerk whistled. "A plain nut."

"I seen how crazy he looked," said the information clerk. "Good thing he didn't miss an' hit you, Courtney."

A little stenographer fainted. One of the telephone operators discussed it with a chummy runner. "I wouldn't work here now, not if you paid me! It's awful bad luck."

"Gee, if I was afraid of stiffs!" he said, pityingly.

The scrubwomen grumbled at having to clean up the floor again. "Ought to be extra pay for this. . . . Bad enough to clean them floors once."

Paul Judson, returning from Jackson on the morning train, did not learn about the grim protest until he reached the office.

V

THE SCATTERING

XXIX

STELLA COLE loitered, fascinated by the glisten of the new Judson kitchen. She addressed the cook, with that shade of superiority family servants invariably feel to newcomers.

"Could you ask Miss' Mary to step heah a secon', Mahaly?"

The girl departed, sniffing superciliously at the old mountain woman who still had the monopoly of the Judson laundry.

The gaunt-cheeked negress faced her mistress with an elemental dignity. "Miss' Mary, kin you ask Mr. Judson a favor fo' me?"

"Surely, Stella. What is it?"

She traced the linoleum pattern slowly with the frowsy toe of a black slipper. "Hit's dis way, Miss' Mary. Ah'se movin'."

"Moving! From the mountain?"

"Yassum."

"It isn't——" she hesitated a moment. "It isn't—the strike?"

Mary Judson shivered as she spoke the word. The overtones to that word jangled horribly, summoning with their ghastly discord troops of disordered pictures, fragments of sorrows, jagged moments of agony. Around that word she grouped mentally Pelham's distressing breach with his father, the son's growth away from her, the dead-fingered protest of Duckworth's suicide, glimpses of red death staining the kindly mountain, the wilful burning of the house that had stored memories

which, next to the Jackson childhood, were the most poignantly joyful life had given her. That word summoned the defacing of the mountain's beauty and harmony, and her present exile from it; as well as a spiritual exile, the cold-visioned knowledge of the chasm between her and Paul that had widened irrevocably in the hushed storms that were their quarrels born out of the strike.

The keen black eyes took in something of this, as it shadowed momentarily the lined, tortured face of the wife of Paul Judson. Mary Judson had grown old, older than the soft gray of her hair and the gray prints around her mouth indicated: old with the timeless age of torn illusions and murdered dreams: old with the age that the same three years had brought to Stella Cole.

"No'm, Miss' Mary. . . . Yassum, dat is. . . . Ah'se movin'."

A spasm of pity smoothed the mistress' drawn cheeks, as she felt gripped by the roughened brownish face, gnarled by its helpless acceptance of the death of hope. "Do you. . . . Have you found a house, Stella? Do you know where you're going?"

"Yessum. Ah knows whar Ah'se gwine."

"And you're going——"

"Home, Miss' Mary."

"Home?"

"Yessum. . . ." Feeling that more was required, her face wrinkled with an old shy eagerness. "To Macon, Miss' Mary; Macon, Georgy. Whar me 'n' Tom comed f'um, afore we done moved to Atlanta. . . . Afore we done come here."

"We'll hate to lose you from the mountain, Stella."

"Yessum." She recrossed her hands uneasily, and straightened up from the table against which her hip had swayed for its solid rest.

Mary Judson studied the face of the mother before her with a hidden hunger, trying to read in its blackened lineaments the elusive recipe that had brought that flicker of happiness at the mention of home.

"Your boys. . . . You have Ed still, haven't you?"

"No'm." The rich tones grew gossipy, in a detached way. "Ah ain't got none of 'em. Jim he die fu'st, Miss' Mary; he die w'en de mine oxploded. De Lawd tuk him fu'st; he wuz a good chile. Den Babe. He wuz mah baby; dey shot him. Dat wuz two. Den Will an' Diana dey die, w'en de house burn down. Dey shoot dem too. Dey wuz good chillun too, Miss' Mary. Ah ain't ben 'specially a sinful 'ooman; Ah s'pose dey desu'ved it somehow, Ah caint figger out. . . . Dat makes . . . yessum, dat makes fo'. Tom he die; he wuz ole, it wuz his time. Dat lef' Ed. De las' time dey bruk up dem strikers, dey shoot Ed." She gulped, closed her eyes a minute.

"I—I hadn't heard."

"No'm. Ed wuz diff'runt. Ed he kill a man. A white man. But de jedge tu'n him loose. Dey wuzn't nothin' wrong dar, de jedge he say. Dey made Ed a depity. Den dey kill him. . . .

"Ah tole dem boys, Miss' Mary, Ah tole 'em a powerful time ago, hit wuzn't no nigger's business ter meddle in white folkses' fusses. Dey seed diff'runt. De Lawd done tuk 'em all, 'cep' me. Ah ain't got no business here, Miss' Mary. Ain't got no folkses here. Ah got two brudders in Macon, Georgy. So Ah'se movin'."

Mary bit her lips, to steady her words, to force back the tears that insistently crept down her own cheeks. "Anything that Mr. Judson can do for you, Stella——"

The negress dug around in the littered bulge of the handbag the mistress had given her, and brought up a greasy leather-covered book. "Dis here's Diana's bank

book, what she save f'um her wu'k. Ah thought maybe Mr. Judson could git me de money. Dar's thuhty fo' dollars, she tole me. An' Ah got Tom's benefit money f'um de Galileum Fishermens, it comed in a letter." She discovered the creased check, and handed it over. "Den Ah'll have some money over w'en Ah gits to Macon; dey'll be gladder to see me; you know how it is, Miss' Mary. An' if Peter could drive me 'n' mah stuff to de depot, if he wuzn't too busy——"

"Of course I'll see that you have Peter. What day are you leaving?"

"Sad'day. De train goes at two erclock."

"I'll see that he gets there in plenty of time."

Stella's eyes roamed unconcernedly around the shining rows of aluminum pans; she sighed with satisfaction. "How's Miss Susie an' Miss Nell?"

"Both doing finely. Susie's living in Detroit, you know; and Nell is studying art in her neighborhood."

The old mammy leaned forward. "Ah seed Mistuh Hollis w'en he wuz heah las' monf. He do make a fine sojer, Miss' Mary."

"We are both proud of him. And now with Ned visiting in Jackson, there are only two of us here."

"Mistuh Pelham ain't come roun' much, is he? He doan't git along wid his paw, do he? . . . Dat's what mah boys dey say, in dat union. . . ."

Mary breathed out heavily. "They do not agree on everything, Stella."

Stella's eyes rounded with satisfaction; with the intimate impertinence native to negroes who have grown old in confidential employ, she nodded her head proudly. "Mah boys dey got along finely wid deir paw, Miss' Mary. Thank you kin'ly, ma'am, fuh speakin' to Mr. Judson."

Finally the trunks and boxes were packed, with the help of neighbors from Lilydale. Brother Adams' boys

got most of her sons' clothes, except the newest suits; these she folded into the bottom of the biggest trunk for future emergencies. Peter was on hand, at Mr. Judson's orders, to crate such of the furniture as she wished to take; although many of the extra things went to this friend and that. . . . There did not seem much use in taking everything.

Babe's cap with the new mining lamp, Diana's school books and framed diploma, the old family Bible, Ed's re-shined deputy's badge, were wrapped carefully together.

At length the last package was hoisted onto the wagon, and after laying the shoebox of lunch on the seat Peter was to occupy, and taking a final drink of spring water, she clambered carefully up to the driver's bench. Peter hopped up with gray-haired cricket-like agility, clucked sharply, and the horses jogged off.

They drove behind the crest, on the circling road above Lilydale. Peter chuckled to himself.

"What you laughin' at?"

"Ah'se thinkin', sistuh Stella, dat you sho' buried a passel er people in dis place."

She nodded in complacency. "Six of 'em, Peter, six of 'em."

He chuckled on. "Dey gwineter plant you nex', sistuh Stella."

"Dey gotter kill me fu'st."

She looked back, as the road turned into the viaduct for Adamsville, and sighed heavily. She remembered the arrival in the city . . . the wait in the office of the Galilean Fishermen, while the children ate up all the cold fish sandwiches and speckled bananas Tom had gotten for their lunch. All gone. All gone. Unbidden, fragmentary pictures of the romping, frolicking boys, sober Diana, came. . . . Jim crying, when the hatchet chopped

his foot. . . . Babe's round face. . . . Ed's face, and the others, in their pine-wood coffins. . . . Tom's kindly smile. All gone. A weak tear welled from under each old eyelid.

She looked around cautiously to see if Peter was noticing. No, he was drowsing forward, letting the horses choose their own way.

She undid quietly the end of the box of lunch, and took out a sandwich. Real chicken breast! The sisters of the Zion Church certainly did do things up in style.

XXX

THE visit of the president of the National Steel Company was the floodtide of the year to Adamsville. On Paul Judson, both as President of the Commercial Club and through his connection with the mining companies, fell the largest share of the reflected glamor from the guest's powerful personality.

After the luncheon at the new Steelmen's Club, the party crowded into cars, to inspect the region's mineral development.

"Eight solid miles of mountain here," Paul's inclusive gesture swept the stretch from Hazelton to far beyond North Adamsville up the valley, "five other locations within a ten mile radius . . . seventeen camps in all."

"It's a big plant, Mr. Judson."

"It's the largest in the South, sir. Coal yonder," he indicated the valley beyond Shadow Mountain, "only nine miles as the crow flies. The cheapest iron and steel region in the world. They don't grow that close together in Pittsburgh, the Lakes, or anywhere."

"A wonderful opportunity. . . . We're prepared to talk business."

"So are we." Both smiled the comprehending smile of men of achievement.

Sam Ross and urbane Judge Florence took the visitor for a round of the patent tipples. "We're just getting over a little strike in these mines," the Judge expanded.

"I've followed it. Came out all right, didn't it?"

"Oh, yes. But do you know, those fellows hung out

for over a year! And they were beaten from the start."

"I know. In the Colorado trouble——" Reminiscences came in opulent detail.

Governor Tennant, a member of the receiving party, stayed behind for a word with Paul. "Did Jerry Florence speak to you for me?"

"Not yet. . . ."

"He will, when he has the chance. My second term's up next year, Paul. The state wants a business governor. Adamsville hasn't had her chance for five terms. . . . Would you. . . .?"

The owner of the mines drove his hands into his pockets, clenched to mask the sudden exhilaration. His voice remained unthrilled. "It's out of my line, Bob. . . . I doubt if it could go through."

"Not a doubt of it. The primary's the election, remember; we can make the papers and the politicians so insistent, that you can't refuse. You'd hardly have opposition."

"I'll see what the Judge thinks. . . . You'll hear from me by Friday."

"The offer stands."

The people's executive motored after the guest cars.

Paul Judson stood alone on the old cottage crest, surveying the overnight growth of the city toward his mountain. The houses on East Highlands had lapped closer and closer, until they broke in a spray over the foothills of the ore-rich summit.

Managing vice-president of the biggest mining business in the state, third largest land-owner in Bragg County, governor after next January! Well, he had gotten where he had planned, sixteen uneven years ago.

He recalled vaguely the vision that he had had, when he had sat on the same crest beside Nathaniel Guild, and decided to purchase. He would bring the city, and the

state, to the feet of the mountain. . . . He had done it.

The jutting enginehouse smokestacks, the ramp offices to the right, the snarl and screech of the loaded cars on the narrow-gauge lines, forced themselves into his attention. Not a scene of beauty; and there was a charred desolation where Hillcrest Cottage had once spread its graceful lines.

It was not the dream he had had. A man dreamed blindly; life brought to pass a substitute instead of the sought goal. It was a necessary process; since dreams must conflict, and the restless shift of things constantly opened new possibilities, closed old ones. No, it was not what he had pictured. . . . There was no son beside him now, to take up the work in turn and pass it on to endless Judsons. Pelham. . . . Hollis in service, too pleased with the work to give it up. . . . Ned already determined to be a surgeon. . . .

But it was a magnificent achievement.

Musing, he walked over the grayed site of the old house. His toe met an obstacle jutting in the grass. He poked it up with his cane. It was the fused handle of the Bohemian glass epergne which had been grandfather Judson's. He slipped it into his pocket to show Mary.

His wife, her face lined and colorless, as if from too many hours and years spent indoors, listened with intent attention to his account of the afternoon. Two sickly spots of color glowed at what the governor had said.

"But . . . it will mean a hard contest, will it not?"

"I don't think so. The primary is the only chance for a real fight; and the Tennant crowd will stop that in advance. You'll have to brighten up a bit, Mary. You ought to do more entertaining. . . ."

"I'm not very strong, Paul."

His gruff "Nonsense!" was the prelude to the further

account of the planned amalgamation with National Steel. "We're still to have control of this district; Florence and I will be elected directors. It had to come; competition is waste; coöperation is the modern method."

His wife sat with her eyes intent upon the melted fragment of colored glass in her hand. She turned it this way and that, up before the fading light, seeking what semblance of the colorful old token of Jackson life remained in it, what part was merely a charred, dead fragment of happier beauty.

"So I thought," he continued, unaware of her absorption, "that we could entertain the visiting gentlemen and their wives at dinner to-morrow evening."

A pinched expression of pain crossed her face. "You have not realized, Paul, that I am frailer this spring than any time since Ned was born. . . ."

"I mean at the Steelmen's Club, not here. It won't be any trouble. . . ."

"I can make the effort."

"You must see Dr. Giles. I had a talk with him about you; he says it's only nerves. If you'd quit thinking about that old fool that shot himself in my office, and those niggers that fooled around the place until they got shot. . . . There's nothing really wrong with you. Nell must give up the art school; you need someone to look after you."

"She doesn't want to come; she's happier there."

"You ask Dr. Giles." He went on with elaborate suggestions about the dinner; Mary Judson laid down the blackened, fused handle of glass; then held it again against the darkened light without. Hardly a glint of color remained. . . . That night she laid it away upon a closet shelf in one of the unused rooms of the great house.

By Friday, after a long talk with Judge Florence, Paul

had made up his mind. He had his secretary wire the governor to run back to Adamsville for a consultation; he sent word to Robert Kane, who had left the directorate to succeed Pelham as state mining inspector, to meet him half an hour before the governor was due. No chance that either would fail the engagement; one crook of his little finger, and the state came at his bidding. The iron mountain had given that power to its iron master—a magnetism repellent but irresistible.

When the two builders of the mining strength rose to meet the governor, there was a subdued glitter of expectation in the eye of the younger man. He took the governor's hand with a new assurance.

Bob Tennant — "Whiskey-barrel Tennant" — had sought his accustomed solace on the ride up from Jackson; his face was flushed brick-red, although his tones were still straight.

"Well, Paul—am I in the presence of the next governor?" He essayed a satisfactory bow with oldtime courtliness.

". . . Yes," Paul answered slowly

"That's great, old man!"

"Shake hands with him, Bob—Mr. Robert Kane, your mining inspector."

Tennant's self-possession bridged the surprise. "So he's your trump-card!"

"Can you put it over?"

"Whatever you say goes with me, Paul; whatever I say, goes with the state. You won't mind frankness, Mr. Kane; we're practical men. You didn't want to run yourself, Paul?"

The magnate walked the length of the office, smoothing a cigar between his fingers. He tore off the silver wrapper, rolled it into a ball, and flung it deftly into an open basket. "There's a lot of soreness about that strike still,

Bob; it's hardly worth the trouble. Jerry Florence agrees with my idea. Kane'll make a good man; his gift union card is worth a few votes. You have something else we need."

"Speak it out," Tennant nodded with vigorous affability. "Anything in heaven or hell for a friend—ain't that what they all say about Bob Tennant, old man?"

"Yes. . . . Todd Johnson's an old man, Bob; ready to retire. You can keep me in mind for the next senatorial vacancy; say within two years."

"Why didn't I think of that! Well, gentlemen, we'll regard that as settled. Let's go by the club, and do a little celebrating."

"We'll join you there in an hour," the astute iron man, half-pitying the other's craving, assured him. "Wait for us."

When Tennant had gone, the master walked throughout the office, rolling the unlighted cigar with satisfaction around the rim of his teeth. "He'll do as he says, Kane; we furnish the funds. . . . You'll have a job, the next four years."

"Matters in general? The war?"

Judson regarded him thoughtfully. "It won't last four years. There's certain victory, now that our country's in. I'm thinking about conditions to follow. You see what's happening in Russia——"

Kane laughed self-consciously. "We wouldn't be safe there. In some mining corner, where the radicals control, they jailed all the mine-owners; even shot one, for being a monarchist. But here, in this country——"

"That's the idea. We've got to convince the American workingman that he is never to turn on the creator of his prosperity. We'll have sporadic unrest; and that spineless bunch at Washington add to it, by kowtowing to the railroad brotherhoods, and even allowing unions among

government employees. We can stiffen up their backbones."

"Why, our workingman is not only the best paid in the world, he's getting a larger share all the time—even in some lines in Adamsville."

"Yes. . . . That's what we must stop. We did it, to the miners. What we've done here, we can do elsewhere. Patriotism, prosperity—these answer any discontent. Elections or strikes, we can't lose, with these as achieved slogans. Now that we're in National Steel, we have their backing as well. The mines are safe; we've got to keep them so. If once we give way an inch, they'll demand two more. I know you'll hold fast."

"Yes. . . . As governor, I'll hold fast."

"Now to find Bob Tennant, and keep him alive until he has you elected."

They left the watchman to darken the office, and departed for the Steelmen's Club.

The weeks that followed that last strike meeting pushed Pelham into deepening despondency. The Charities work was over; at the end he noticed a growing aloofness in the philanthropy offices. His father and the iron men contributed heavily; why should the son be welcomed?

Louise was gone; he had made no effort to fill her place, although Dorothy Meade had stopped him on the street one morning, and looked searchingly into his face —less as friend of Jane, than as if to appraise the changes in him, and measure him for a vacancy in her days. . . . She need not look there; he felt that that yesterday was not worth reviving. Jane's absence removed a substantial joy from his life; the mere bodily gap was not insistent enough to warrant casual or commercial filling.

A burst of energy sent him after permanent employment. The doors were shut kindly in his face; the mines

would have none of him; and he found that the corporations' fingers were upon the whole city.

"Of course, I can find something for you," Lane Cullom consoled, "but—mere office work; not what you're fitted for, my boy."

Adamsville was locked to him. The moribund socialist movement would use his voluntary services; but he needed a livelihood. Serrano, Jensen, Mrs. Spigner, on a hurried visit, had called by; the comrades were reacting to him, though the unions held off. But Adamsville would need a scorifying industrial schooling before solidarity could come. He had lost his craving for the rôle of teacher . . . even if he had been acceptable.

He must leave Adamsville. He confided this to Jensen, and the Hernandezes. "I might organize for the National Socialist Office, or do something for the New York Philanthropy Bureau."

"That's bourgeois, comrade," objected Mrs. Hernandez.

"I must make a living."

The morning's mail, a few days later, contained a curt note from Jane; his fingers tore it open with awkward haste.

"I hear that you are planning to leave Adamsville," it ran. "Even if we can't live together, I can not see you waste your possibilities, here or elsewhere. Come by and see me, before doing anything definite. I am your friend, as long as you will have me."

He hurried to the phone, pausing a moment, with hand over the transmitter, to steady his voice.

She told him he could come at once.

There was no buoyancy in his greeting. "I've made a mess of things, Jane."

"It was disgraceful," she sympathized vigorously,

"raking up that old story. Pig-headed fools always turn on you."

"They were sick of the whole thing; they couldn't see that the strike had brought them closer to victory."

She leaned forward, lips parted in the old bewitching way, her brown eyes radiant. "Did your father arrange that?"

"He's strong on family."

"It was a shame."

"I meant more than that. . . My savage report as mining inspector. . . Then—with you."

Her head remained averted.

"Maybe you'd rather I wouldn't mention that——"

Gradually she faced him. "I think I understand that . . . too. You're not worse than most husbands. . . . Only, I wish you'd finished sowing your wild oats before your marriage."

"I felt——"

"You see how it is, Pelham," she explained as gravely as to a little child. "You had to choose between me, and other women. You made your choice."

"Was it . . . necessarily . . . final, Jane?"

Her frank eyes searched his face. "Sometimes I tell myself it ought to be. It's hard. . . . You see, I love you, Pelham."

"Suppose I came to you, on your terms. . . ."

"I should reserve the right to act as you did, if I ever wished to."

He nodded, trying to make out what was going on within her mind.

"I would tell you, though," she went on. "With that understanding . . . yes."

He did not touch her, sensing the physical revulsion she must still feel. His voice trembled in joyful disbelief. "You'll really——"

"I am your wife. And I love you."

Her fingers brushed his hand; he shivered in passionate repression.

"Jane——" A troubled crease roughened his forehead, "I'll try——"

"That's all I can ask."

They sat in dynamic silence, intent on their diverse thoughts. He relaxed into restful satisfaction, havened again; her doubtful fancies strove to shape of crumbling material some firm future for them both.

Her words came with difficulty. "What you ought to do, Pell, is to get work with the Federal Mining Commission. Washington outlooks are broader than Adamsville; particularly in war-time. That's your chance."

Worn with multiplied disappointments, he was unable to follow her enthusiasm. "We couldn't——"

She filled in details. "Senator Johnson would put in a word for you. Congressman Head's practically a socialist. Why not get it?"

"If you realized how downhearted——"

"You write to-morrow." She smoothed his tousled hair with the old familiar gesture. "It's an endless fight, dear."

"I think you'd better sell the car," she told him, the morning the federal commission arrived. "You may be sent anywhere now—our bank balance is low." She stopped halfway down the stairs, to wipe off a picture dusty from its weeks of neglect.

"It's fine to be back in harness again!"

"Marital, Pell?"

His comfortable grin answered her. "Both kinds."

"You'll be sorry to leave Adamsville?"

"The iron-hearted city. . . . Sorry—and glad, too. It's one of the finest places in America—to leave."

Her nostrils wrinkled with the old-time intimate charm. "You have deteriorated."

"What could you expect, with myself as my only audience?"

Then he regretted leaving the way open for reference to another auditor; but, after a noncommittal scrutiny, she did not pursue that topic.

"And then," Pelham continued hurriedly, "we're not leaving it forever. We'll return for another round with the triumphant malefactors."

"You think there's a chance?" Her question was from the heart.

"The South is twoscore years behind the rest of the country. We were premature. . . . But the South can't lag forever. Even the dreadful war will quicken intellects everywhere; every day's headlines mention 'socialism,' where it was never heard of three years ago. If we are wise—as we weren't in '61—it may come sensibly; if not, God help my respected father, and the rest of the monied vultures, in that day!

"I remember my first view of the city—the furnaces, and the coke ovens; it looked like the pit of hell to me. . . . Well——"

Word came at last of his detail to duty at Washington. It was hard to end the home they had built together in the Haviland Avenue house; but the prospect ahead salved the regret.

The work, when Pelham came to it, proved congenial and illuminating. He was nearer the core of the matter now; the mining industry of a country passed before his eyes.

At the suggestion of the deputy commissioner, he accompanied that official on a special trip to New York, the port from which the manufactured steel was being hurried over to the hungry fields of France. Jane went

along; the three stood together in the arc-lit glow of the vast freight station.

"I thought you wanted to see it," the friendly commissioner repeated. "Rails, guns, gun-stocks, wire, a thousand sundries—and every car your eye can see straight from the Adamsville mills. There's enough steel railing there to triple-track from the Marne to Berlin, with lots to spare!"

They drew together at the vastness of the spectacle.

"The metallic sinews of war, my boy—just as the boys of Adamsville and the country are the human sinews. I understand your feelings, Judson; but can't you see that they are spreading the same ideal of democracy that your comrades work for?"

"I hope some good will result; it's not easy to see clearly," Pelham answered slowly.

As the commissioner left, the son of Adamsville placed his arm around Jane. "And our mountain did all of this! What pawns it made of us! We flung up here, the miners scattered, endless change and turmoil. . . . I used to say the mountain mothered me; but it flung me out like my father too. Perhaps it embodied all of us. Perhaps"—a sudden surge of bitter memory turned the drift of his thinking—"perhaps autocracy would suit the mountain, as well as democracy."

"I think not," Jane replied slowly. "When its products are washed away by the streams, they quicken the whole soil. Humanity can afford culture now for all; all must win their chance at it."

"The war sets us back. . . ."

"And pushes us on too. After it is over, these metallic and human sinews will rebuild a world democracy at peace. Men have failed; the women come to their tasks now."

"Yes; the aching past surely has taught us something.

We must build right, now. Old standards are gone; the world furnace of war has quickened all the people. . . ."

"We've done our small part."

"With the biggest part still to do. We are to see the beginning of the building of the New World in the hearts and souls of men. . . . For that is the final building."

They walked out to the jutting end of the vast pier, studying the aimless restlessness of the ocean drift sloshing against the clustered piles.

She turned to stroke a raveling from his coat. Upon the bright flush of her cheek he brushed a fleeting kiss.

A resting gull flopped heavily from a water-swung stake, skimmed low over the gray sparkle, and lessened on beating wings into the sun-glitter to the west.

XXXI

SPRING on the mountain. Over the eastern rim of sand hills the sturdy sun of May flared up. The neutral gray pooled in the valleys woke to a rustling flame of green; the wind whipped from the crest the last shred of clinging cloud, and dried the wet kiss of the mist upon cottage and bungalow, rumpling the summit as far as eye could cover.

The sibilant buzz of motor trucks, returning to the distant dairies beyond the second mountain, died eastward. Lawn mowers clicked rhythmically, school tardy bells rang, chatting nursemaids chose the stone benches under the deepest shade of the parked roadways. Jays flickered noisily through the ringed oaks still rising from the sparse areas of fenced outcrop.

A gray limousine disturbed the sunny height with its alien whirr—turning from Logan Avenue to reach the great flowery green on the crest left of the gap. Two men climbed out, stretching cramped limbs; the first with firm carefulness, testing each footing before he rested upon it, the second with deferential assistance.

The elder man walked over to a curved bench facing the spread of the city below. From old habit he pulled out a cigar, twisted the silver wrapper into a ball, and spun it deftly into smooth grass covering a healed scar caused by the old mining. His teeth crunched into the well-packed leaves; his tongue rolled the unlit Havana around the rim of his mouth.

The other stopped a step or two behind. "It's rough on you, Paul. . . . You're all alone in the new Hillcrest Cottage now, aren't you?"

"Yes, Governor. . . ."

He pondered soberly, and spoke again with a deprecating cough. "Your wife was an exceptional woman."

"Death makes no exceptions," the other mused aloud; there was small feeling within him that this was anything else than a philosophic excuse for weakness in others. After a few minutes silence, he took up the thread again. "You know, Kane, Mary hadn't been strong for some years. Life on the mountain was hard on a woman. She took the strike very much to heart; her house was burnt then. . . . That was why I declined the Senatorship . . . then." His squinting gaze took in the panorama before and to the rear. "It's changed. . . . Not a mine within ten miles now; nothing nearer than those wonderful new openings this side of Coalstock. . . . Houses, houses, houses. . . ." His eyes looked from the ample homes along the crest estate, to the cheap frame houses crowding the foot of the hill, on the side toward Adamsville; and then to the negro settlement of Lilydale behind, which a pushing real estate firm had continued to the very border of the Hillcrest lands.

"It's a pity the land fringing yours hadn't your development. When the riff-raff once move into a neighborhood——"

"I know, I know. The mountain's held out, so far."

Paul achieved a moment's isolation by walking to the edge of the summit. The children would return soon to their scattered homes; he was the last Judson living in Adamsville. . . . He—and the mountain. He had risen to the crest of his ambition—he asked no more.

The mountain soil was still iron-stained; but much of its strength had passed to him—had given him this iron grip upon things and people. Power, iron power . . . wherever men were, the iron sinews of the mountain had carried the name of Paul Judson.

"Have we time for that trip to North Adamsville?" Kane at last interrupted.

"Get in. Something's wrong out there; dissatisfaction, that should have been squelched. I'm going to make a change."

Following the northward trail of robin and flicker, the gray limousine whirred away from the smoothed crags and their reddened memories.

The children dawdled back from school. The homing older people returned from office and club, from mill and furnace and store. The artificial lights by night made golden wounds on the darkness. One by one these blended with the black, except for the street-globes reared below the damp green of the leaves.

The sprinkled glitter of city lights below cast a quiet shimmer over the drowsy hillside. Far away, in a giant semicircle, an intermittent surf of furnace glare and coke-oven glow mottled with dusky crimson the low haze of the sky.

Following the sun trail, the silver glitter of the Lyre climbed from the east, the northern cross spread its ungainly form, the soft brightness of Vega poised like a fleck of white light above the somber fringe of Shadow Mountain. The soft glamor of the May night reaffirmed its immemorial sway over the sleeping hulk of the mountain.

Two screech-owls sent their shivery call through the dark. Shreds of cloud drifted lower and lower, until they rested lightly on the foliage above the healed scars

of ramp and gulley. The stars sagged westward; after them the clouds, and all the trespassers by night, were quietly driven by a faint breeze rustling its promise of dawn.

THE END.

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